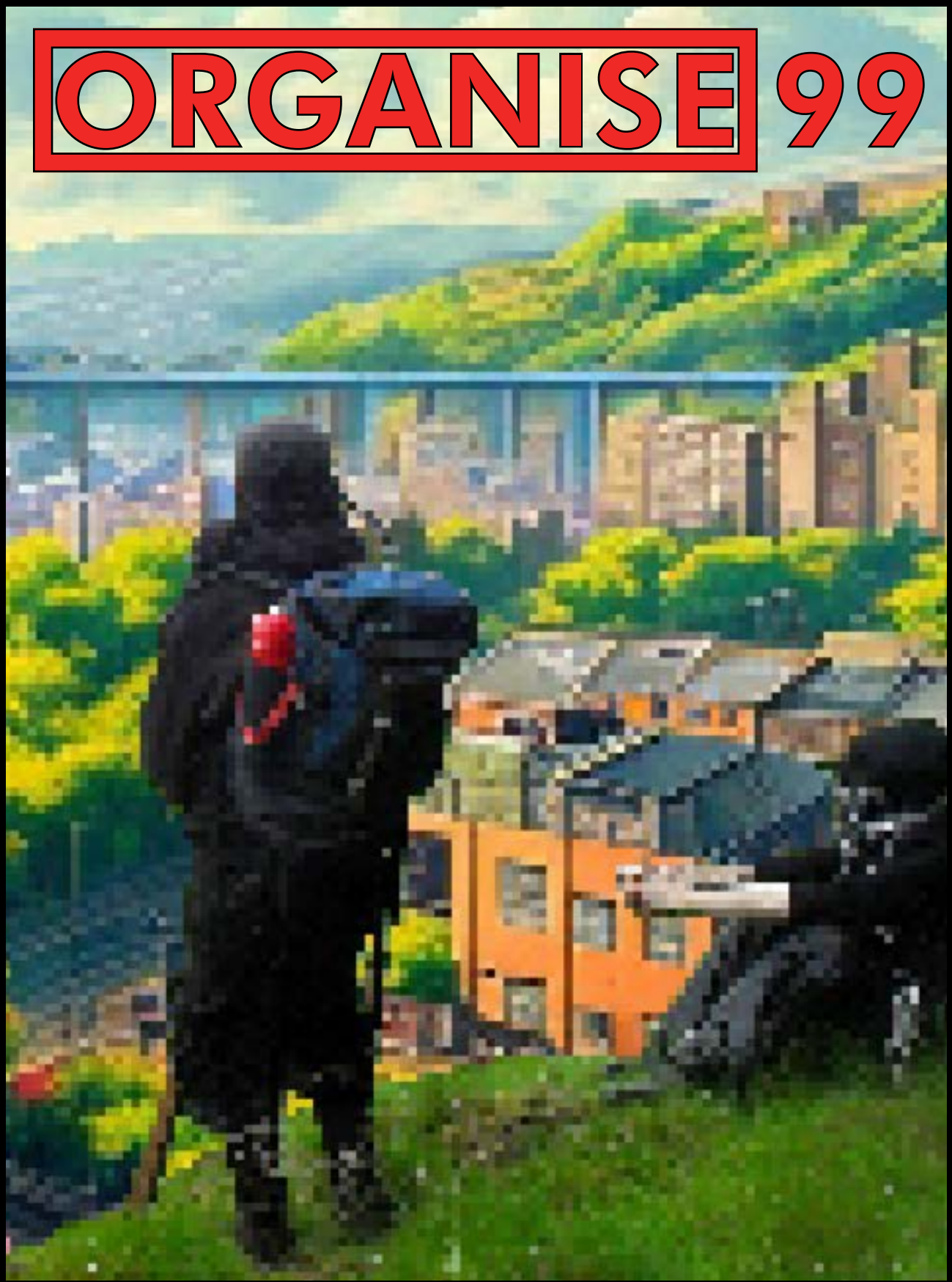
ORGANISE 99



Organise is a project of the Anarchist Federation [AF]. It is composed by the Organise Editorial Collective [OEC]. As anarchist communists we fight for a world without leaders, where power is shared equally amongst communities, and people are free to reach their full potential.

We punlish twice a year with the aim to provide a clear anarchist viewpoint on contemporary issues and to initiate discussion on ideas not normally covered in agitational papers.

With this in mind we positively solicit contributions from our readers regarddless of their political tendancy and host a variety of media relating to anarchism alongside broader anti-authoritarian and autonomous analogs.

As a result, the contents of this magazine do not represent the collective viewpoint of the AF unless stated as such. Revolutionary ideas develop from discussion, they do not merely drop out of the air!

We hope this publication will help that discussion take place and light a fire in your heart.

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CONTENTS

8 HOW BRITAIN ENABLED GENOCIDE
14 ANARCHISM AND IT'S MISUNDERSTANDERS
20 THE REVOLUTIONARY POTENTIAL OF MINORITY LANGUAGES
21 TOBY SHONE RECALLED TO PRISON

22 A WALL IS JUST A WALL, IT CAN BE DESTROYED
26 AKBELEN FOREST
28 SUPPORT SUDANCE ANARCHISTS IN EXILE
30 INTERNATIONAL ROUND UP

40 7 SETEPS TO ORGANISING A LOCAL FOOD NOT BOMBS
44 AFFINITY GROUPS
48 ANARCHISM AS A THEORY OF ORGANISATION

54 REVIEW: MEANS AND ENDS
56 REVIEW: PENUMBRA CITY
58 INTERVIEW: THE MAN CAME AROUND
62 THE SUPER HAPPY ANARCHO FUN PAGES
64 WILDCAT

"The mission of the anarchist movement is to establish in society, by word, deed, and example, an understanding of the principles of economic justice and, by overthrowing the state and capitalists, to "clear the space" – to provide the socio-political conditions for its realization."
- Dmitry Petrov

I used to say the anarchist movement in the UK was like a small candle flame billowing away in the wind, It's firey potential contained, waiting for some future explosion of revolutionary energies.

Over the past few months I've started to notice a change in temper, particularly amongst younger comrades. They are looking at the world and it's future, keen to the struggle they are facing. Sure, some shrug their shoulders and embrace nihilist joy and expect to live their life in the twilght of humanity, others tho, they are gritting their teeth with steely determination to find suicidal capital. They are ready to fight for the future and they are looking at the institutions of anarchism in the UK.

They find us lacking.

Because we are.

Twisted up in personal beefs, legacies of internicine bullshit, and tiresome, oh so fucking tiresome dramatics from people who haven't done shit in years.

Does it feel like I'm talking to you? I probably am. I'm talking to myself as well. We've become timid and cowed, hardly better than a trade union. We've sat so fucking idle like oak in the glade, reassured that one day the revolution will come. Well it's coming and it's fucking pissed at our failures.

You want to get stuck regurgitating nonsence about "snowflakes" building a "heirarchy of oppression" or debate ad nauseum the merits of social anarchism or lifestylism because someone looks a bit homeless, chavvy or what? too "sub-cultural"?

You can hide in corners of the internet, waffling away about how the kids are ruining your anarchy if you want. I'd rather live. It's time for thrilling heroics and some actual movement. We've ran out of time. We're in the ruins, it's time to start building.

In solidarity, imperfectly as it often is.
To the revolution now.

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Guillem Gallès
September 2023

HOW BRITAIN ENABLED GENOCIDE

We have failed to stop the worst. The Armenian people of Artsakh, after a long and brutal year under siege, are now dying of starvation. Right now, the Azerbaijani state is committing genocide in Artsakh.

The Russian Federation, Armenia's supposed allies against such an existential threat, turned their backs on them at their hour of need. The European Union, the self-declared champions of freedom and democracy, has enabled Ilham Aliyev's dictatorship in its genocidal quest. And the Left, which loves to pride itself on its smug sense of self-righteousness, has dismissed or outright ignored Armenians when they called for help.

Over the past year, the Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention has issued no less than 8 alerts about the situation in Artsakh. They saw what was coming and were desperate to stop the worst from happening. But we didn't listen. Many of us still don't even know it's going on.

Our press, whether right-wing tabloids or left-wing broadsheets, have done nothing to publicise the plight of the Artsakhi people. Our esteemed representatives in the House of Commons, in all their posturing, bickering and bluster, have said absolutely fuck all about the situation in Artsakh. Our government, content with squeezing its own people for every last ounce of value they're worth, couldn't care less. Why is that?

Yes we can point to the obvious, that news about the Caucasus has never been a priority for the people of Britain. But it goes deeper than that. There's something more sinister beneath the surface of the wide-scale silence and inaction. There are members of our ruling class that don't just support the genocide of Armenians in Artsakh, they're actively profiting off it.

Conservative Friends of Genocide

In Parliament, there exists a group called the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Azerbaijan (APPGA). Their stated goal is "to develop good relations between the legislatures and governments of our two countries."

This is nothing too out there, parliament is full of groups that advocate for good relations with fascistic dictatorships; from Putin's Russia to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. What is different is how the APPGA operates, in the shadows and outside of the public eye. Whereas other parliamentary groups diligently report their finances in the monthly reports on their activities, the APPGA has never published a single statement on its income and expenditure.

The extent of the group's corruption has only been discovered through the hard work of investigators. The Azerbaijani state has regularly financed all-expenses-paid trips to the country, which have been enjoyed by MPs on both sides of the aisle. As the APPGA has only officially declared one of these trips, we can only speculate just how much money has been funnelled into their pockets.

The APPGA's dodgy dealings started under its previous chair Mark Field, who was Minister for Asia and the Pacific until he violently assaulted an environmentalist activist in 2019. Before he resigned in disgrace, Field made sure that his work to sanitise the image of a dictatorship would only ever be done with the most

upstanding of citizens. Of course, Prince Andrew, the Duke of York, was the natural choice for such an important lobbying job. While facing scrutiny for his association with child sex-trafficker Jeffrey Epstein, Andrew visited his good friend Ilham Aliyev no less than a dozen times, in an attempt to increase trade between the two countries. Outcry from human rights groups swayed neither the Prince, nor his backers in the APPGA.

Despite the name, the only party currently represented in the group's activities in the House of Commons is the Conservative Party. Its officers include: Matthew Offord, MP for Hendon, and Martin Vickers, MP for Cleethorpes; while its operations are run by its vice-chair David Duguid, MP for Banff and Buchan, and its chair Bob Blackman, MP for Harrow East.

The group's leader Bob Blackman isn't unknown when it comes to corruption, having been discovered to have regularly fudged the numbers on his expenses claims. Nor are his apparent fascist sympathies confined to the Caucasus, as he has publicly associated himself with the English fascist Stephen Yaxley-Lennon (Aka: "Tommy Robinson") and the Hindu nationalist organisation HFB, supporting their violent rhetoric against British Muslim communities. He has also been one of the loudest and proudest homophobes in the country, having sickeningly advocated for the reintroduction of section 28, after opposing the legalisation of equal marriage together with his APPGA colleagues Offord and Vickers. It is then quite logically consistent with his odious ideology that he would find a friend in the corrupt and fascistic regime of Ilham Aliyev and his cronies.

As leader of the APPGA, Blackman has become the most outspoken British voice for Azerbaijani state interests. Over the years, he has received tens of thousands of pounds from the Aliyev regime, although he has never brought up this conflict of interest in parliament. He has also remained a close personal friend and collaborator of the Azerbaijani oligarch Javanshir Feyziyev, sticking with him even as he was investigated for laundering £5.6 million through the UK.

Working closely together with his good friends in the Azerbaijani ruling class, Blackman has knowingly made himself into a sock-puppet for their propaganda. When the Azerbaijani regime launched its unprovoked war against Armenia in 2020, invading Artsakh and placing its people under a deadly siege, Blackman wasted no time in lobbying the British government to support the aggressors. He received "information" on the conflict directly from the Azerbaijani embassy, blaming Armenians for the actions of a state that explicitly desires their elimination.

Once Artsakh was safely under the occupation of the Azerbaijani state, Blackman decided it prudent to visit the region, barely containing his glee as he toured sites of ethnic cleansing. He reported to Liz Truss of his desire for the UK to establish a trade deal with the genocidal regime, conveniently failing to mention that his trip had been paid for in full by that very same regime. This was the culmination of years of campaigning by the APPGA, in direct collaboration with Feyziyev, to support the Azerbaijani state's offensive actions against Artsakh. His actions were influential enough that the APPGA doubled in size, roping in even more corrupt parasites excited by the opportunities of enabling crimes against humanity.

Even outside of the APPGA, there are Tory politicians making money off the mass murder of Armenians. Bob Stewart, MP for Beckenham, was already making the rounds for his racist abuse of Bahraini human rights activist Sayed Alwadaei. Now he is facing even more trouble, as openDemocracy uncovered that he had failed to declare his role as director of Azerbaijani weapons company Ksantex SARL, while he was serving on the UK's defence select committee. British oligarch and Tory party mega-donor Javad Marandi has also been discovered to have made dodgy deals with Bob Blackman's good friend, the alleged money launderer and genocide profiteer Javanshir Feyziyev.

There may be even more Tories that are profiting off the Artsakh genocide, we can only wait and see.

Blood for Oil

So the Tories are corrupt and in bed with oligarchs, what else is new? Well nothing is new, that's the problem. The British ruling classes' complicity in the genocide of Armenians, and the corruption of the Azerbaijani regime, goes far deeper than a single political party and much further back than a few years.

The British exploitation of the Baku oil fields goes back over a century. When the Shell corporation was founded, it controlled a near monopoly over the industry, becoming a key supplier of the British war effort during World War I. A British force was stationed in Baku to protect the oil fields from the Ottoman Empire, which by August 1918 was assaulting the city. By this time, the British were well aware of the atrocities of the Armenian genocide. Nevertheless, when the moment came, they abandoned the city's Armenian population to the Ottoman onslaught. Tens of thousands of Armenians were killed during the September Days. On the ruins, the Ottomans established the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic. But they were never able to exploit the oil fields they so desired, as the Ottoman Empire surrendered to the British only weeks later.

As though it had shifted with the wind, the British Empire quickly allied itself with the new Azerbaijani state. In Artsakh, Armenians formed the self-governing Karabakh Council, but it went unrecognised by the British, who instead appointed Khosrov bey Sultanov as governor of Karabakh. With British support, Sultanov set about massacring the native Armenians in Ghaibalishen and Shusha, killing thousands.

All of this would be for nothing. In 1920, the Red Army invaded Azerbaijan and Armenia, annexing the two back into the Russian Empire; now rechristened as the Soviet Union. Aping the strategy of "divide and conquer", Joseph Stalin awarded Artsakh to the Azerbaijan Soviet Republic. This ensured that should

Russian control of the Baku oil fields ever be threatened, war in the Caucasus would be unavoidable. When the Soviet Union finally collapsed, the Republic of Artsakh declared independence from Azerbaijan, but it would go unrecognised by the new exploiters of Baku's oil.

Since Azerbaijan regained independence from the Soviet Union, the largest and most direct beneficiary of the Aliyev regime has been the oil giant British Petroleum (BP). While British humanitarian Caroline Cox was witnessing the unfolding horrors of the Maraga massacre – during which dozens of Armenian men, women and children were kidnapped, tortured and killed – BP was making a deal with the perpetrators of the massacre in Baku. Armenia would eventually be victorious in the First Nagorno-Karabakh War, securing the people of Artsakh a period of respite from attacks against their mountainous enclave. But BP and other international oil companies came together to ensure that another war was inevitable, funnelling money into the pockets of the Aliyev regime in return for concessions in the oil fields of the Caspian sea. That oil money would go onto fund the Azerbaijani state's 2016 attack on Artsakh, its 2020 conquest and now its ongoing genocidal blockade.

These oil companies aren't naive to the consequences of their actions, they just don't care. In fact, over the past few years, they have secured even bigger and better contracts with the Azerbaijani government. As Armenians die and the world burns, BP and its cohorts will continue to extract oil on shiny new platforms built by blood. BP has even secured "green energy" contracts in Artsakh itself. Don't expect to read anything about this in British news though, as BP has already paid the BBC £300,000 to whitewash the Aliyev regime's image and report the "wonders" of Armenian cities bereft of the life of their original inhabitants.

We also can't expect BP to ever willingly pay for the incalculable damage it has caused. One of BP's biggest political advocates in the UK its one of its own former engineers, APPGA vice-chair David Duguid. Last year, Duguid used his position in the government to block movements for a windfall tax on the oil company, conveniently forgetting to declare that his £50,000 stake in BP may have had an influence on him.

As if Brits needed more reasons to despise BP, which has been scalping us with increasingly high energy prices and encouraging the authoritarian repression of activists that protest against such social and environmental devastation. That monthly energy bill is not only feeding the record profits of the UK's powerful fossil fuel oligarchy, it's enabling the mass murder of

thousands. When winter comes this year, while Brits may be bankrupting ourselves to pay off the BP mafia, Artsakhis won't have the option of such a luxury. Unless we do something right now, they will almost certainly die in the cold.

How we stop the worst

Every genocide in history has had its foreign backers and profiteers. Prince Andrew, BP and the Tories of the APPGA should rightfully be seen no differently than the fascist sympathisers, industrialists and aristocrats that supported the Nazis.

00 If we lived in a just society, this kind of bloody corruption wouldn't be tolerated for a single moment: MPs like Blackman, Duguid and Stewart would have been removed from power four times over; Prince Andrew would have been stripped of his royal titles and privileges; and BP would be dissolving while its executives faced retribution for crimes against humanity.

But we don't live in such a world. Corruption and racism isn't just tolerated by the Tory Party, it's actively encouraged and completely normalised. Abuse would never be challenged by the House of Windsor, it's their very reason for existing. And no petrochemical company would ever face consequences for their actions, as they have been profiting off mass murder since the day they first set oil alight.

States and corporations can't solve the problems that they have caused, even if they wanted to. Genocide is the ultimate form of state violence against a people. Once a genocide is ongoing, the only way to stop it is to destroy the state that is perpetrating it and all the mechanisms that are enabling it. This is the lesson that has been learnt again and again throughout history.

Armenians have already suffered enough from half-measures against the institutions that want them eliminated. We are now far beyond the point of prevention; genocide is already underway, right now. The only option remaining to save the people of Artsakh is to bring down Ilham Aliyev and his entire wretched regime, along with all the bastards that enabled him.

In Britain, this means we need to intensify the fight against BP; this is no longer just a question of climate emergencies or financial difficulty, this is an existential fight for survival. We need to intensify the fight against the Tories, who have abided by the corruption of their colleagues in the APPGA for far too long. We need to intensify the fight against the monarchy, which has continued to protect a sick old man from the consequences of his actions, whether personal or political.

Artsakh's fight is also our fight. If we continue to sit by and do nothing as thousands of people die, then we too will have blood on our hands, we too will be complicit in the worst. ■

Margaret Killjoy
July 2023

ANARCHISM AND ITS MISUNDERSTANDERS

This week I've been researching Mexican labor history, preparing for an episode of my podcast that includes Ricardo Flores Magón, probably the most influential Mexican anarchist. Since his organization predated most of the rest of the revolutionaries of the Mexican Revolution, his name and legacy have been recuperated heavily by the Mexican government. [Source] His anarchism, of course, has been largely left out of the conversation. It can't be completely removed though, no matter how they try–the Magonistas (a name he hated) were anarchists and they weren't subtle about it.

Thirty-five years before he came onto the scene, something else of note happened. First, in 1865, anarchist textile workers in Mexico City at two factories went on strike. This gets referred to as Mexico's first strike (though we'll talk about that). They were brutally repressed, with soldiers firing into the crowd. Second, years later, in Tlalnepantla (a city quite nearby, now part of the Mexico City metropolitan area), anarchist women from several factories went on strike and won, the first successful strike in Mexican history.[1]

Every time someone claims something is the first strike, or the longest trial in a country's history, or any other superlative like that, I'm skeptical, so usually I try to look it up. There was a silver miner strike in the city of Real de Monte in 1766. I suppose that was technically New Spain, not Mexico. The Real de Monte strike gets called the first labor strike in North American history. Lots of things get called the first thing.

But those textile workers were the birth of the modern Mexican labor movement, which predictably opened in a hail of gunfire from the government. It's also not shocking to me that it was organized by anarchists. Around the same time, indigenous folks, anarchists, and indigenous anarchists started a wave of agrarian revolt that terrorized the landed elite and redistributed land to dispossessed peasants. [2]

I read history books for a living, and my biases come through in the topics and books I pick (leaning towards anarchism, leaning towards direct action, leaning towards mutual aid, leaning towards anticolonial struggle, leaning towards feminism). I try to be aware of those biases, but I'm still left with the overwhelming realization that anarchists were everywhere in the second half of the 19th century, and in most countries, anarchist socialism (that is, a socialist movement that advocates against the creation of a new state, but instead to organize society horizontally) was the predominant form of socialism, often even outnumbering more reform-minded socialists, what we might call today democratic socialists.

The revolutionary Left was heavily anarchist or heavily anarchist influenced until the turn of the century, or in many countries, until the Russian Civil War that the Bolsheviks emerged victorious from. (I don't have it in me to call it the Bolshevik revolution. It was a pluralistic revolution waged by multiple socialist tendencies that the Bolsheviks took over through the large-scale murder of their fellow revolutionaries. Yes I'm a salty old anarchist bitch. Yes, that still feels like the most accurate way to describe what happened.)

Yet you'd never know that anarchists have been

everywhere and had their hands in everything if you read any mainstream history–whether that history is produced by a capitalist country or a state socialist country. Sure, some of our names live on–Ricardo Flores Magón, for example, as a revolutionary leader. And Spain, Ukraine, and Korea in particular are unable to entirely bury our memory. But every piece of culture and history from the past 150 years or so that I've looked into is full of anarchists. My other work is in fiction, and early on I realized that you've got Aldous Huxley, Ursula le Guin, Oscar Wilde, Michael Moorcock, Franz Kafka, Henry Miller, Anthony Burgess, Joe Haldeman. Household names (depending on the household). None of them famous for their affiliations with anarchism.
Anarchist refugees from Spain were among the fiercest partisans fighting in France, and it was anarchists in tanks with names like Durruti and Don Quixote who first rolled into Paris during the liberation from the Nazis in 1944. [3]

Our history is buried.
Anarchism isn't the only buried history, of course. I have to put in an incredible amount of effort to figure out what the women were doing in any given social struggle, because we were always there and our names are never written down. Even that first successful strike in Mexico, by anarchist textile workers? The women's names aren't recorded, but instead that of some man who was involved with organizing them. Luisa Quevedo was one of three anarchists who, in 1869, made their way to Chiapas in Mexico to give arms training to the peasants there, whose movement inspired the revolutionary leader Zapata and therefore the later Zapatistas who inspire so many today… yet she's mentioned in history as the wife of another anarchist.

God forbid you want to find out how anyone in history related to queerness or sex work. Even among diehard revolutionaries, for a long time it was hard to get people to admit "yeah that guy liked fucking other dudes" or "this lady made her money the old-fashioned way." Even though the first magazine for gay men in the world (there we go with "first" again) was published by a German anarchist named Adolph Brand.

And since so many of us anarchists were queer, and likely so many of us were sex workers (the deepest buried of all histories), we're harder still to find. Magnus Hirschfeld, the pioneering social scientist who explored LGBT issues in Wiemar Germany (who later had to flee the Nazis who burned his research), he wasn't an anarchist, but he had this to say about us: "In the ranks of a relatively small party, the anarchist, it seemed to me as if proportionately more homosexuals and effeminates are found than in others." He meant that as a compliment and we'll take it as one.
The burial of our history has more effects than I know how to count. One effect is how often we reinvent the wheel–learning the hard way over and over again which allies we can trust and which intend to murder us, learning the hard way over and over again the strengths and weaknesses of collective decisionmaking, learning the hard way over and over again what is involved in organizing revolutionary activity at scale.
Another effect, the main one I want to talk about right now, is that people just don't know about us. They don't know what we're about. They hear the name "anarchist" and they will come to certain conclusions, based on what they've told or what they've personally considered about "a society without government." If we're lucky, it'll be based on what they've seen of us. Or rather, what they've seen that they know was us.

The tip of the anarchist iceberg is different in different times and places, but it's always just the tip. For a long time, the public knew us by our assassins, who brought heads of state to early graves. Other times, the public saw us just as rabble rousers, looking to stir people up for the sake of it. More recently, we were most known for the black bloc, for rioting at protests. Sometimes, we're known for our mutual aid projects–and among other protest organizations and the progressive left, we're sometimes known for our skill as organizers and facilitators and medics.

Overall, though, we're known for riots. Assassinations. Bombs. Destruction. Which have been a part of our history, but only part of it. This ties neatly into one of the largest problems we run across: people don't realize that anarchism is an umbrella term for a group of coherent and specific political and social theories and practices. They think it just means "the government is gone now, good luck." The most visible aspects of anarchism don't always inform anyone that we stand for anything else.
One time I gave a talk about anarchism and fiction in Portland, about ten years after that city had seen a militant series of anti-war protests against the second Iraq War. One person asked the question, basically, "why do you anarchists always show up and fuck up our protests?"

I had a more concrete answer than usual that day, because I'd been heavily involved in the organizing of the specific protests he was referring to. The answer to his question was, simply, that those protests had been organized by anarchists–or with heavy anarchist involvement–in the first place. Those who saw anarchists as "outsiders" to those protests clearly hadn't been involved in their organization. To be clear, most of the anarchist organizers weren't 20-year-olds wearing black masks, but most of us were in solidarity with the black bloc. (Well, I was a 20-year-old in a black mask during the time I helped organize those protests, but I wasn't a central organizer by a long shot.) The question I could have asked that man in response would be "why did you show up at a protest intended to disrupt society enough to stop a war and expect no one to do anything disruptive?"

But again, we're only known for the tip of the iceberg. The first anarchist I met was in my boy scout troop. At least, I think he was an anarchist. He was the cool older punk guy, maybe 17 years old. He lived in his mom's basement, which is cool when you're 17, and he had Black Flag CDs and Guns & Roses shirts. There was a pool table in that basement with a bed sheet over it that covered an inordinate amount of car stereos. These were, presumably, stolen.

I had no idea that anarchism was a political ideology. I don't know if this 17-year-old did either. I had that "the government is gone, good luck" understanding of anarchism. I was 13, so that version of anarchism appealed to me. I asked him the big important question about anarchism: "when you draw a circle-A, do the lines break out of the circle or no?"
He gave me the correct answer.
"It doesn't matter."

I didn't stay interested in anarchism throughout most of my teens, because–as I saw it–I was too rational to gravitate towards extremes. I settled on a lackluster appreciation for social democracy and the Green party, but it didn't set a fire under me.

Nothing political did until, at 19, in 2002, I met anarchists. I met the black-clad protestors who were dead set on putting their bodies on the line to stop the neoliberal agenda that was stripping the developing world of resources and leaving bodies in its wake. The protestors had a coherent political ideology and a coherent political method. It appealed to me. I haven't looked back.

I'm not here to convince the reader to become an anarchist, however. I'm here to say that fundamentally, most discussions between anarchists and non-anarchists involve both parties talking about two different and unrelated ideas. Most, but not all, people critical of anarchism are not arguing against the political ideology that I or millions before me have espoused. They aren't arguing against a free association of cooperative, autonomous groups who federate with one another in order to build an antiracist, antipatriarchal society based on mutual aid and mutual respect. They're arguing against "no rules."

Some of those arguments are in good faith. Others are not.

Anarchism is an umbrella term for an assortment of specific and identifiable ideological positions. That is to say, anarchism is not a vague thing. It's a complex thing, it's an organic thing, and it's an ideology against ideology, but it is still a specific and identifiable thing. When I say, for example, "anarchist capitalists are not anarchists" I mean to say that capitalism is entirely outside the bounds of what has been identified historically as anarchism as a coherent movement. Anarchism, as part of the larger umbrella of socialism (another misunderstood word), was specifically developed to oppose capitalism. Anticapitalism is at least as central to anarchist theory and practice as anti-statism is.

This isn't to say I advocate for tight definitions and bounds on anarchism. We fight for, as the Zapatistas would put it (who are not anarchists but with whom we have engaged in mutual discussion, support, and respect for decades) "a world in which many worlds are possible."
Anarchism is a scary word for very kind people. We

picked an aggressive name. It has always been a bit of a provocation. When that guy I don't like very much, Proudhon, declared himself an anarchist in 1840, it was a bit like saying "I am a terrorist." At least based on the connotations of the word anarchist at the time. But he also meant it directly and clearly, saying "as man seeks justice in equality, so society seeks order in anarchy." (The reason I don't like him very much is that when he said "man," he literally meant men and was excluding women. Other anarchists immediately and rightly took him to task about his misogyny.)

I can't really blame people for misunderstanding anarchism. Whenever people on both sides argue "no, anarchy means this" or "no, anarchy means that," I want to just shout "did you know that words have more than one meaning depending on context and who is saying them?" It's perfectly understandable for people to view anarchism as advocacy for anarchy, defined most commonly by society as "an absence of government and order" or whatever. This is not a historically defensible definition of anarchism, as a political position, but it's perfectly understandable for people to assume it must be based on what they've learned growing up.

Anarchists have tried to address this problem in numerous ways. One is rebranding. The other word for anarchist with the most widespread adoption is probably "libertarian socialist." There's an appeal to this; it's specific. We are socialists–that is, we believe that the means of production should be distributed fairly. We also are the opposite of authoritarian socialists, which makes us libertarian. The problem is, to half of the US, "libertarian" means "capitalist" and to the other half, "socialist" means "authoritarian." So it doesn't really compute. (Early on, people used "socialism" and "anarchism" interchangeably, because authoritarian socialism is by and large a later development. We started adding "libertarian" to set ourselves apart from those we disagreed with about authority.)

I'm not interested in rebranding, though. I just believe in outreach. Maybe I'm too caught up in how the word anarchism and how the black flag and the black and red flag set a fire under me when I was 19, a fire that hasn't gone out yet. But every political label is misunderstood and misappropriated and has been probably forever. In 19th century Europe, "republican" meant "anti-king" and bordered on socialist and anarchist. In the 19th century United States, "republican" meant "anti-slavery and willing to start a war over the issue." These days, "republican" means "watches too much Fox News."
I bristle at the sorts of questions like "how would medication be manufactured and distributed in anarchism?" These questions can be asked in good faith, and if they are, they deserve an answer. But usually the undertone of the question is "it would not be, and therefore by advocating for anarchism you're advocating against life-saving medicine."

Most of the askers wouldn't be able to describe to you how medication is manufactured and distributed in our current system, or how it was in Soviet Russia. It's not the kind of specialized knowledge that the average person has. The cheeky answer that occurs to me first is of course "well it doesn't work very well now either, now does it?"

But the original question itself shows a misunderstanding of anarchism (which is, again, an understandable misunderstanding). Anarchism does not generally argue against the manufacture and distribution of medicine. It is not "corporations" that make medicine, not "governments" that develop international standards for safety. It is people who do both of those things. People embedded within organizational structures.

Someone asked me recently what we would do about the power grid. It feels like such a good example that it actually becomes a sort of metaphor for anarchism. People tend to conceptualize the power grid as a centralized source of electricity sent out to where it needs to go. There is some truth to that. Then there's off-grid life, where power has to be generated and stored locally. When I lived off-grid, relying on solar, it became very clear just how inefficient that system is. Power is only generated when the sun is out, so I have to store it in batteries that are not only expensive to buy, but they're ecologically destructive to produce.

Wouldn't it be better, then, to have a grid? That isn't necessarily centralization. Where I live now, I have solar again. This time, it's grid-tied solar. I produce electricity on my roof that goes into the grid for other people to use. When the sun isn't out, I draw from the grid. The grid can be–and to an extent already is–a distributed system rather than a centralized one. Of course, I also find it valuable to have backup systems for when the grid isn't available, and micro-grids serving individual areas are a good redundancy or even main source of power, depending on the specific needs of a community.

People think of government as the grid and anarchism as the off-grid cabin. This is the crux of the misunderstanding. Anarchists seek to distribute power, in every sense of the word, not just to localize it. This isn't to say an off-grid cabin (again, the metaphorical one) is counter to anarchism, but it's not how most people would choose to live. Anarchism is presenting a mesh of overlapping, distributed systems. Some of those systems, in order to share, require certain standards (I can't put DC electricity into the grid, for example). Not everywhere needs to be solar, not everything needs to be wind-powered. Diverse systems can work together to shore up each other's weaknesses. Overall, we could probably do with an awful lot less reliance on electrical power, but most of us see the utility in keeping it around. Anarchism is capable of presenting answers to questions about supply chains and manufacturing, but those answers are also not, quite, what anarchism is. Anarchism is not a set of answers. It's a set of tools with which to find answers. The answer to "how would anarchist society handle the following," is "we will organize in such a way that those who are most capable of answering that question will be able to get together and answer it." I don't mean this as a vague platitude, I mean it concretely. When workers control a factory, for example, rather than the stockholders, efficiency is increased, pay is increased, working conditions improve, and hours are shorter. In an anarchist society, the people who know how to make and distribute medicine will be able to meet and discuss how to produce better medicine more efficiently, and there would not be the monetary barrier between a patient and her meds, nor the national barrier between a researcher and her peers.

When we say "we don't know what an anarchist society would be like because we are not yet in one," we are not being vague or evasive. We are saying that societies ought to be constructed by the people in them. Anarchism is a set of tools and principles with which to construct societies that value freedom and cooperation. We actually do have examples of what those societies can look like, but where we are at now, and where we will be in the future, is not revolutionary Catalonia, Ukraine during the Russian Civil War, or Korean Manchuria. We should not expect to reach the same answers as they did, even if we apply similar problem-solving methods to our problems.

We draw from history–not just from the history of self-styled anarchists like those examples above, but the lived experiences of people who are from cultures that are not traditionally state societies or capitalist. We draw from history to write our present, and to prepare to collectively write our future. ■

Margaret Killjoy is a transfeminine anarchist author, musician, and podcaster living in the US. Her most recent book is Escape From Incel Island, published in 2023 by Strangers in a Tangled Wilderness. Her history podcast is called Cool People Who Did Cool Stuff, and she is one of the hosts of the preparedness podcast Live Like the World is Dying. She writes a weekly newsletter on substack that can be found at margaretkilljoy.substack.com

1. https://www.jstor.org/stable/980359
2. https://www.akpress.org/anarchism-in-latin-america.html
3. https://libcom.org/article/anarchists-who-liberated-paris-and-why-they-did-it-robert-p-helms

Capybarbara
September 2023

THE REVOLUTIONARY POTENTIAL OF MINORITY LANGUAGES

I'm old enough to remember when the BNP advocated for minority languages, in a roundabout and obviously racist way. One of their aims in their 2010 manifesto was to ensure the only languages permitted in local and national governmental documents and papers were English, Welsh, Cornish, Manx and [Scottish] Gaelic. How the BNP planned to factor in the Irish language, taking into account the ongoing occupation of the Six Counties, remains a mystery to me.
But all this was jarring for the young left-wing language nerd to read about, especially since in England, there is so little discourse about minority languages, including those spoken in the countries neighbouring our own. There was a danger that the far-right would somehow fill this void of ignorance with their bigotry, as they so often do, and while the BNP thankfully failed in this case, some minority language communities themselves contain a minority that is very right-wing.

The void of ignorance is real in England. It's not too uncommon to meet others who are well into adulthood and entirely unaware that the Celtic languages exist. Anecdotally, I knew of people who joined my Irish classes here in the expectation that they would be taught how to speak English with an Irish accent as opposed to their native Geordie. On learning that it's a real and very different language from English, they dropped out.

"But they all speak English anyway over there" is a very familiar refrain that many, if not all, native speakers of English who are learning another language have heard, no matter what language they're learning. There is something about some English-speaking monoglots that gives them an urgent need to immediately devalue and deride learners of other languages in a way that is seldom seen with other academic pursuits.

Applying that to minority languages, however, makes the situation even more dire. Speakers of Celtic languages, for example, are almost always fluent in English too, meaning that there is always the looming threat of reverting to English for the sake of convenience. It also makes it far rarer for people to learn minority languages out of necessity, and as such, is often seen as a purely academic pursuit - learning for the sake of enjoyment. Many working-class communities did not have that luxury, so learning a minority language is sometimes regarded - unfairly in my view - as a little elitist. Juxtaposed with that, of course, is the economic and social reality faced by many native speakers of minority languages. There are reasons a language becomes minoritised, and these reasons affect many facets of the lives of these native speakers.

Imagine the language you are learning is practically unknown to many of your compatriots, even though it's still spoken, written and displayed extensively on bilingual signs in the country right next door. And then imagine that historically, your compatriots colonised that country, as they did with many others, and they still have a bit of it, and the decline of the language can be strongly attributed to that colonisation.

One assumption I come up against time and time again when I tell people that I'm learning Irish, is that I have Irish heritage and that this must be why I'm learning. I do have Irish heritage, like around 20% of the population in England, but the approval of my ancestors was neither motivation or help to me when it came to my multiple and still-failing attempts to understand the fifth declension of the genitive case. I am also engaged in many, many activities on a regular basis that I am certain most of my ancestors would strongly disapprove of, and as such I have no desire to placate them; it is a hopeless endeavour at this point. The references to my heritage are on some level an attempt to 'claim' me – the Irish-speaker thing cancelling out the English thing, so to speak. However, I'm white, and Irish speakers of colour, who hold Irish citizenship, were born in and have only ever lived in Ireland, often experience outright bigotry and exclusion. I've witnessed them being told everything from 'well-meaning' but highly misguided statements such as 'If only actual Irish people could speak the language as well as you!' to abuse, calling into question their right to speak the language at all. If including me involves excluding those people, then I want no part in that inclusion.

My core belief in learning Irish is that either the language is for everybody, or it's for nobody. Nobody should have to take an Ancestry DNA test to feel justified in their decision to learn Irish. Being interested is enough to make you part of this vibrant and varied community.

The future of the language is the key focus here, and that future is determined by the speakers of that language here and now. When you decide to learn a minority language, you become part of the struggle for that language's future. Learning a minority language can be an act of resistance against the status quo, an acknowledgement that languages do not simply die out, but like our environment, are being killed off, by powerful people with names and addresses.
We place a lot of emphasis, wrongly in my view, on perfection when learning languages. Growing up in a monoglot environment can make you afraid to make mistakes – the mistakes anyone has to embrace when learning another language. It can be confronting, as an adult, to suddenly realise that when under pressure to communicate only in the language you are learning, you now have the same vocabulary range as you did as a 5 year-old. Unfortunately, as an adult, it's rarely socially acceptable to express that frustration in the form of a tearful tantrum, and as a result many people revert to the politer but no more helpful option of shyness.

The road to fluency is a long one, but it's not a race, and you may as well enjoy the journey. It is incredibly rewarding to be part of something greater than yourself, and it's an experience that many of us, as leftists, can already relate to. And practically speaking, it can be highly useful to communicate in a minority language on a demo as it dramatically lowers the risk that you'll be understood by cops! ■

TOBY SHONE RECALLED TO PRISON

Toby Shone is an anarchist who was imprisoned for nearly two years accused of being the administrator of counter-information project 325.nostate.net. After the political prosecution failed and the cops had to drop the case 5 days before trial in October 2021, Toby received a sentence of 3 years 9 months for possession of psychedelic medicines. He was released on 28 December 2022 under heavy restrictions and forced to live in a filthy bail hostel in Gloucester for 9 months. He had just moved back into a flat 9 days ago.

On the morning of 19 September 2023, he was driving to an appointment with his probation officer when he was pulled over and arrested by an armed police unit. He was taken to HMP Bristol. He is awaiting more detailed information, but his legal team say that the allegations are that he breached two of his license conditions. Toby is in great spirits as ever and requests letters and books. ■

Please write to him at:
Toby Shone A7645EP
HMP Bristol
19 Cambridge Road
Bishopston, Bristol
BS7 8PS

Jungkir Maruta
of Serikat Tahanan
August 1st 2023

A WALL IS JUST A WALL, IT CAN BE DESTROYED

We know that throughout history, various prisons around the world have experienced riots and uprisings. But this is an almost rare occurrence. Prisoners had to live for years in the same gloomy room and were thus considered passive subjects. How do we define a resistance where we can almost only rely on ourselves, in a space that is almost isolated and full of pressure, which offers almost no opportunity to organize, such as a prison?

Walls are just walls, and humans are only humans. Even prisons and their guards have weaknesses, and prisoners do their best to exploit those weaknesses whenever the opportunity arises. In Indonesia, smuggling and bribery of corrupt wardens is common. The existence of prohibited objects in prisons in Indonesia has been well documented in many mass media reports. These range from drugs, cell phones, sharp weapons, and even firearms! I've also heard of prisoners paying to take women in or even out of jail for a while.

But all the examples above are privileges (usually corruption prisoners consist of politicians and government officials) that most other convicts do not have. To overcome various limitations and powerlessness, rule violations and sabotage also often occur. Failing to control the spread of cellphones, jammers were occasionally installed, but prisoners continued to destroy them secretly. This also includes destroying CCTV, stealing cooking utensils and office equipment, shoplifting food from the kitchen and then reselling it, to manipulating daily inspection.
Clichés like, "rules are made only to be broken," hold true here. Article 4 of Permenkumham 6/2013 describes 22 prohibitions for each convict or detainee. Such as: having financial relationships with other prisoners or wardens; commit immoral and homosexual acts; make an escape attempt; keeping money illegally; equip residential rooms with electronic equipment; installing electrical installations; have means of communication; storing weapons and tools that can cause fire; etc. Throughout my experience, none (except the spread of heretical teachings) of the 22 points of the prohibition that has never been violated. Defiance persists all the time and compromises are often maintained by wardens based on their own interests.

Resistance also occurs in a form that is not at all confrontational, or in a very passive way. This is for example by pretending not to hear calls or orders, or pretending not to see officers present. Prison life is, in places, like a cat and mouse hide and seek. There are those who gamble, get tattoos, take drugs, use cellphones, all of these need protection so there are always inmates assigned as spies to raise an alarm if a guard approaches. In the police cell where we were locked up the whole time, we used a mirror to see through the bars. We took turns monitoring using mirrors, and the prisoners on duty we called "spies".

At regular inspections, we several times presented rhymes (in Indonesia we call it "pantun") as a more creative and fun way to criticize, convey aspirations and complaints, or simply as a statement so that detainees must be in solidarity with one another. One of the rhymes that I wrote criticized extortion. One time, the food provided by the family was not delivered to the detainee in question. The food (something of value!), was only handed over if we paid the police. Therefore, in front of the police at the assembly, I read a short rhyme:

Tulang iga tulang rusuk / Kiriman kita dilarang masuk
[Rib ribs / Our shipment is prohibited from entering]
Or, there has also been a rhyme to honor prisoners assistant (tamping):

Makan emping di empang / Tanpa tamping kami timpang
[Eating emping in a pond / Without tamping we are lame]
Sometimes, the rhyme that I convey is just an outpouring of the heart:
Batuk-batuk, makan gorengan / Aku berdoa untuk, dia yang kurindukan *[Coughing, eating fried food / I pray for him, the one I miss]*

The prisoners (including the police) loved to listen to me. They often ask if I have prepared rhymes beforehand. And sometimes the police also reply to our rhymes, because I'm not the only one who composes rhymes.
From police custody, I was transferred to a detention center. There, we had to spend 12 days in quarantine in very dirty cells, full of garbage, clogged toilets, full of worms, centipedes, cockroaches and other insects, without lights and water. One night, it rained. I woke up and realized that our cell had become a pool, my body soaked in the flood. To be able to move to a bigger and cleaner room, we have to pay around IDR 500 thousand. If on the last day we don't pay, then we will be moved to the solitary confinement which is meant for punishment. This is blackmail!

Therefore, I invited dozens of inmates in five other quarantine cells to join the pay strike. I wrote a letter for a senior inmate to read. I wrote:

Please read this letter in each cell and take turns until quarantine cell number 6. Make sure all detainees know the contents of this letter. We propose that we all go on strike to pay the relocation fee. It's not our obligation, but illegal fees from employees. We received news that the relocation money was IDR 500,000. If we don't pay, we will be moved to the solitary confinement next door. We have a friend next door, who has been in a solitary confinement for a month because he can't afford to pay the bills. If we all went on strike, the wardens would be confused, whether we were immediately kicked out without paying or whether we were moved to a solitary confinement. It's possible we're all being held in quarantine cells. We have to endure three more days here, until new prisoners are transferred here. Because the transfer of prisoners takes place every two weeks. This will make the warden confused to decide whether we are all put in the cell straps or stacked with new prisoners. If we are united, we will all be expelled without having to pay. Remember, our families outside are working hard to make money. Later in the room, we also have to pay the head of the room, the down payment, not to mention his living expenses. If we still don't get kicked out without paying, at least, we demand that the relocation fee be reduced. Remember, ants don't bite ants. Ant just bite anyone who steps on them. Ants bite rollicking. Arrive at cell 6, please burn this letter. Don't let any prisoner be accused of being a provocateur. For those who agree, let's discuss it tonight.

The senior prisoner agreed, though he said he'd rather be here than be moved to the big room. I don't know why. But the letter was not read and he told me to keep the letter. He himself loudly incited prisoners from other cells to strike. Many agreed, but on the twelfth day, it turned out that many prisoners had already paid because they could not stand the suffering in the quarantine cells. Unbeknownst to me, my lawyer had paid the warden money to get us out of the quarantine cell. I am so ashamed. Imagine, I was the one calling the strike but instead I was get out. My name was called, and I could only watch as the other hapless prisoners, including the senior inmate who couldn't afford to pay, had to stay in that damned cell a little longer. Later, I can understand why he prefers to stay in quarantine: residential rooms are no less terrible and corrupt. Although the quarantine cells are terrible, at least there is no need to pay!

When I was transferred to prison, I opened a food stall. I sell coffee, cigarettes, bread, instant noodles, and many other staples in the room. One day, all the inmates who were selling were gathered by the warden. They asked that all stalls be closed, except for those who were willing to pay a deposit of IDR 5 million to the "prison cooperative". Even so, the inmates are asked to pay an upfront fee of IDR 500 thousand, not to mention a monthly fee of IDR 250 thousand.

In the past, before there were cooperatives, inmates could receive large quantities of staple goods (eg instant noodles). As a result, the prison in my place is said to be like a bustling market, because many prisoners resell their family's goods. Currently, the number of family goods is limited, so prisoner must buy from the cooperative at a higher price. One day, the warden intercepted a prisoner who was caught selling repackaged side dishes sent by the family, because the wardens are involved in the business of selling food and trying to maintain a monopoly by the cooperative.

I resisted such extortion and kept selling secretly. I camouflaged the stall by scattering items into different lockers. If during a raid these items are found, then the locker owners just have to admit the items as their own. This is a black market strategy to oppose monopoly by cooperatives and wardens. A few weeks after the we were called, the wardens also diligently raided the rooms and confiscated several of the shop's items, such as bread. At that time I swore an oath in front of the other inmates, that I would fight back if my shop's goods were confiscated (Luckily, that didn't happen).

If this sounds trivial, I need to remind you that instant noodles can be a luxury item in prison. Especially if the side dishes we receive are half-cooked rice, sandy and rocky, fish with a pungent fishy smell, and vegetables accompanied by caterpillars. Trust me, I've eaten all of that before and I'm not exaggerating. But from that experience, there is a lesson that I can learn, or rather, contemplation about our condition today. If instant noodles traded by a confiscated convict provoked outrage, I can't imagine what would happen if I became a farmer and my land was confiscated. In fact, that is what is happening today in all corners of Indonesia. I was even in the same cell with a farmer who was criminalized in a conflict against a plantation company. He was deeply moved when I handed him the memoirs of Nirbaya prison by Indonesian journalist Mochtar Lubis, because when he read it, he felt the same sentiments as the author who was being imprisoned by Indonesia's authoritarian New Order regime.

Our imagination of resistance invariably leads to spectacular and dramatic forms of popular confrontation, often on a massive scale, whether spontaneous or organized. I suggest that we also see resistance from the very bottom of our being. In a place where isolation and communication restrictions are enforced, staying connected to the outside world is a struggle. Facing institutions of discipline, obedience and supposedly the creators of this deterrent effect, just being yourself is resistance. In a gloomy situation that drags you into a slump, maintaining vitality and being an example is resistance. In the end, I realized that if the prison was basically trying to negate my existence, asserting that I "existed" was simply resistance. If everything is forbidden, then everything becomes resistance.

I know what I'm telling you sounds heroic. Of course. But I also don't care and don't try to act big. I want to share my story and hope this will inspire more people to realize his capacity for resistance in the context of their own struggles. Don't mistake me for a staunch and fiery rebel either. Actually I'm not brave. It would be more accurate to call me reckless. Reckless means knowing he is weak, afraid and will not win, but decides to keep going. I mustered up the courage with difficulty. Apart from that, I also tend to be introverted, quiet, and limit my relationships with other inmates. Most of the time, I was obedient and smiled broadly at the wardens. I never put on a defiant face.

If at any time I have to act, it must be an important and urgent situation. In something worth fighting for, I'm ready to rebel against the warden. Don't worry, I've set limits. I'm also not going to go too far, taking unnecessary risks. I've repeatedly made fatal mistakes, so I'm more careful. I always keep Alexander Brener's message in mind:

I promise to be sober and cunning, agile and dangerous. I promise to act in such a way that you can neither drown me nor surround me with silence. I promise to fight you intelligently and vigilantly, carefully and calmly, so as to strike you gently and forcefully, wherever I can, as long as I have enough strength, even if there is no future in it.

Written with all my heart ■

Jungkir Maruta
August 1, 2023

Jungkir is an anarchist writer and independent researcher. Interested in anthropological studies of stateless society and the history of the anti-colonialism movement in Indonesia. Still committed to writing despite being sentenced to 15 years in prison for possession of marijuana.

Serikat Tahanan, is an anti-authoritarian prisoners association. We organize mainly inside, but also outside, eleven different prisons across Indonesia, reaching out to fellow convicted anti-authoritarian activists to advocate and educate the public about prison conditions in Indonesia. This initiative, driven by the currently convicted, was started as a simple form of solidarity among us—to nurture hope—so we don't feel left out or come out of jail as a more damaged human beings. By organizing in Serikat Tahanan, we are constantly reminded why we started our fight. Our long term agenda is to abolish prison.

We have been writing, or at least learning to write, our own experiences and thoughts inside the prison. We want to publish these writings but, of course, we don't have money. Indonesia's corrupt prison system provides inadequate food rations and forces prisoners to pay for it themselves. All these time we have been living off solidarity from comrades outside prison as it's almost impossible for us to work. Lack of funds and bribe-ridden prison conditions worsen our lives and hamper our writing project. We will use the proceeds from book sales to run the program that has been determined and run by the prisoners themselves.

The book we publish will consist of about a dozen writings by prisoners and ex-prisoners convicted of arsoning, destruction of property, incitement to riots and drug use. This paper will contain social criticism of the structure of Indonesian society, reflections of action, survival in prison, and a wealth of lessons that are useful for audiences and social movement actors. We will also allocate a portion of the free published books for collectives and libraries.

Therefore we ask the international anti-authoritarian activists, anarchists, anti-fascists and abolitionist network to stand in solidarity in our efforts to publish our writings. We have budgeted around IDR 5.5 million (327 euros) for the cost of communicating across prison, sneaking writing tools, editing, printing and distributing the books. Help us publish our writings within Indonesia's corrupt prison system and support prisoners' campaigns!"

serikattahanan@riseup.net

Ikizköy
September 2023

AKBELEN FOREST

Akbelen Forest is located within the İkizköy borders of Milas district of Muğla province in the south of Turkey. For four years, local people, together with ecology activists, had been resisting against a coal mine that tried to destroy 740 hectares of red pine forest, the water source under the forest and the three villages around it (İkizköy, Karacahisar, Çamköy). Two companies with partnerships of YKEnerji (Limak and İçtaş), which operate the coal mine, had previously erased seven villages within the 230 thousand-decare license area from the map for coal mines. The villagers, who had to migrate from the region because their villages were destroyed, lost their agricultural lands, olive groves, pastures where they raised livestock, and all their livelihoods. Coal mining, which destroys the entire living ecosystem and accelerates climate change with the greenhouse gas emissions caused by the burning of coal, must end immediately!

YK Energy is also in the hands of a privatized thermal power plant imposed by the state as a result of IMF policies, and Limak and İçtaş, which are the so-called gang of five companies that have been awarded the most tenders from the state for nearly 20 years. Before the privatization, the power plant, which took care of the public interest in the hands of the state, has now become structures that do not care for the public interest, based on the cooperation of the state and private companies.
In addition to the legal process that the people of İkizköy have been going through for four years, the villagers and ecological activists who have been on guard duty in the Akbelen Forest for the last two years experienced two gendarmerie interventions in two years. Finally, on the morning of July 24, hundreds of law enforcement officers came to cut down the forest. And the Akbelen

forest has been destroyed in a massacre that has been going on for more than a month, using gas, water cannon, disproportionate force, beatings and detentions.

After thousands of felled trees, the fertile soil on the forested area will be shaved and flattened and turned into death pits to be opened for mining. Despite the state's pro-company attitude and the violence and unlawfulness that the state inflicts on its people exercising their constitutional right, villagers and activists continue to stand guard at the edge of the Akbelen forest.There were calls for support from the world for the resistance, which is on the agenda throughout the country, and the last international call was made by the United Nations to end its cooperation with YK Energy partner Limak.

Limak, partner of YK Energy, is also the company that undertook the renovation project of the iconic stadium of Barcelona, one of the famous clubs of the Spanish La Liga, Nou Camp. Akbelen resisters; He calls on the Spanish anarchists, from Barcelona's eco-sensitive parties, to show solidarity for the liberation of the earth. He says do not remain silent when capitalist companies, which make a profit union with the state, slaughter nature, local rights and the habitats of all living things that exist in natural life! We, who are aware that we are a part of the whole web of life on earth, know that the cry of every tree cut down in Akbelen will be heard from Spain too! Do not remain silent to this cry, your solidarity will strengthen our struggle! ■

Twitter address:@ikizkoydireniyo
Facebook address: İkizköy Resisting for Humane Life

INTERNATIONAL STATEMENT: SUPPORT SUDANESE ANARCHISTS IN EXILE

The following is a statement collaboratively written and endorsed by anarchist organizations around the world, including Black Rose/Rosa Negra. This statement originally appeared on Anarkismo.net and is reproduced here in full.

Exile is never an easy decision. It's never a choice. Without resources, it can become a real ordeal. Solidarity is the key to overcoming these difficult times.

We entered into contact with a group of Sudanese anarchists in February 2022, in the midst of the revolutionary unrest that had been shaking the country since 2018. Despite language barriers, we learned from them how to better understand this revolution and the resistance committees at its heart. This group, made up mainly of young students, has even been emulated by an anarchist group in the north of the country.

Like several countries during the "Arab Spring" of 2011, Sudan plunged into civil war in April this year. General Hemetti, commander of the "Rapid Support Forces" militia, launched a rebellion against the Sudanese national army. The country's progressive and revolutionary forces have unanimously refused to support one side against the other, and so find themselves caught in the vice between these two militarized reactionary factions. Nearly 5,000 people have died in this pointless conflict. Two and a half million people have been forced to leave their homes, 500,000 of whom have fled the country. Looting and rape are on the increase and form part of the arsenal of weapons of war used against civilians.

Our anarchist comrades are still in Sudan and were hoping to be able to continue their agitation activities there clandestinely. We provided financial aid before the war and even at the beginning. But the situation has become untenable and no longer allows for any social or political activity. Some members of the group decided to leave the country as quickly as possible after their house was ransacked by the RSF. Others have decided to stay for the time being, and we are trying to help them too.

In conjunction with comrades based in this part of the world, we are working to provide everyone with the best possible conditions for survival in this context. For those who intend to stay, we need to help them address their needs and put money aside if they need it for an emergency departure. For those who go into exile now, we need to exfiltrate them from the country, avoiding as far as possible the dangers that this type of one-way journey entails, and enable them to continue their activism with Sudanese people in exile and the exploited classes in their host country. However, the region is highly unstable (civil wars, coups d'état and other authoritarian regimes) and it is not currently possible to leave the country.

To do this, we need money, and our organisations' solidarity funds alone are not enough. Below are the estimated expenses (in US Dollars):

-Visas: $400
-Travel: $800 (uncertain, as costs are highly unstable)
-First rent in host country: $200
-Food for one month in host country: $300
- Sundry costs for waiting time in Sudan: $1000

This provisional budget remains unstable in a fast-changing economic and security context. It only covers expenses for a minimum of one month. But the situation is such that our comrades will not be able to meet their needs in just one month. We're likely to need a lot more money in the end. Any sums donated, even in excess of this minimum amount, will be used to provide for the comrades' day-to-day needs until they can provide for themselves.

The donations are collected by our comrades in Switzerland who already have an international solidarity structure.

Don't forget to mention "Solidarity Sudan" when doing your donation.

Donations of cash or check can be mailed to:
Association pour la Promotion de la Solidarité Internationale (APSI)
Place Chauderon 5
1003 Lausanne
Switzerland

IBAN: CH84 0900 0000 1469 7613 8
SWIFT/BIC: POFICHBEXXX
Name of the Bank: PostFinance SA; Mingerstrasse 20; 3030 Bern; Switzerland

You may also donate via PayPal using this URL : https://tinyurl.com/SDNAN.

Signed by:
Corodenação Anarquista Brasileira (CAB)
Organisation Socialiste Libertaire (OSL)
Federación Anarquista Uruguaya (FAU)
Embat, Organització Llibertària de Catalunya
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Karala
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Roja y Negra Organización Politíca Anarquista
Anarchist Communist Group (ACG)
Tekoşîna Anarşîst (TA
Anarchist Yondae
Alternativa Libertaria (AL/FdCA)
Aotearoa Workers Solidarity Movement (AWSM) ■

INTERNATIONAL ROUND UP

Argentina

Argentina is once again presented with the choice of socialism or barbarism. The Argentine people are struggling under the tightening waistband of hyper-inflation and the violence of the state, as the Kirchnerist government has proved unable to cope with the economic crisis caused by their neo-liberal predecessors. This has provided fertile ground for the revival of fascism in the country, this time led by an unhinged self-declared "libertarian" who sees freedom in military dictatorship and unrestrained oligarchy. But the forces of reaction will have a fight on their hands, as true partisans of freedom – anarchists, syndicalists and anti-fascists – move to stop them.

Image: Luis Robayo

Artsakh

Starvation. Death. Genocide. This is what faces the Armenians of Artsakh, who have been trapped under siege for a long, brutal year. The Azerbaijani dictatorship has turned intent into action, dedicating itself fully to the elimination of the Artsakhi people through a slow and painful famine. We are now beyond the point of prevention, we now enter a stage where a genocide is happening and must be stopped. Armenian anarchists are mobilising to defend themselves against the onslaught of Aliyev's fascist regime. We must likewise fight against the forces that have enabled this horror. Either we act now, or we will be complicit in the worst crime imaginable.

Image: Alain Jocard

Bangladesh

When trade unionist Shahidul Islam was murdered simply for organising for better wages, the capitalists at the head of the garment industry thought it might pacify the rising Bengali labour movement. But they only demonstrated the importance of unity and solidarity, as capitalist attacks on the workers and the state's attacks on political opposition only continue to bring the people out in protest. The workers of Bangladesh do not yield.

Image: Redwan Ahmed

Brazil

The war for the Amazon is well underway. For too long the rainforest has suffered, as its trees are slashed and burned, its land devastated by intensive beef farming and its environment plundered. Against all this, the Amazon's indigenous people are still fighting for their home, leading the charge that is only slowly being followed by state action. The interests of industrial capitalism still present a powerful threat, they would make a desert and call it prosperity. But environmental activists and land defenders haven't given up yet, nor will they. As slow as the offensive against ecocide is, it is advancing.

Image: Mauro Pimentel

Burkina Faso

As more and more of the country fell into the hands of the Salafists, the Burkinabè soldiers fighting on the front lines took matters into their own hands and seized control of the military junta. The new government – led by Ibrahim Traoré – is explicitly modelling itself after the revolutionary movement of Thomas Sankara, cracking down on corruption and ousting French imperialist forces from the country. Rather than inviting in new colonisers, Burkina Faso has instead turned to its neighbours in Mali and Niger, together forming a united front against the dual threats of Salafism and colonialism.

Image: Yempabou Ouoba

Cambodia

Dictator and King, now unquestioned rulers of Cambodia. Any pretensions to democracy have been eliminated, with the national conservative People's Party cementing itself as the sole political party and the autocrat Hun Sen transferring power to his son Hun Manet. Cambodian anti-nationalists are now forced to operate underground, lest the state catch any wind of their movements.

Ethiopia

Abiy Ahmed's government continues its shameful assault on the people. In occupied Tigray, which continues to suffer from the war imposed on it by the state, government officials steal food from the mouths of the starving, manufacturing a famine from their own corruption. The state is now expanding its war to other regions, carrying out massacres against the Amharic people that don't submit to their regime. The Horn Anarchists continue to agitate tirelessly against this horrific violence, still building their platform against the Ethiopian state.

Image: Amanuel Sileshi

France

The racism at the core of the French Fifth Republic is again coming to the surface. The National Police force, founded by Nazi collaborators to aid genocide and maintained by the restored Republic to repress freedom fighters, has been murdering Muslim teenagers as a matter of routine. The Macron government, unsatisfied with ripping up the rights of workers, is now creepily dictating what school girls can and can't wear. The riots that remain a proud French tradition have so far been unable to stop the continuous onslaught of discrimination, but calls for the end of the Fifth Republic and all its authoritarian institutions are only getting louder.

Gabon

The kleptocratic dynasty that has ruled the country for over half a century is no more. The Gabonese people broke out in celebration at the news that their dictator Ali Bongo, who had plundered the state's wealth and stashed it in the British Virgin Islands, had finally been deposed. The former regime's French backers tried to denigrate his removal in the international press, but failed to make the fall of the petro-dictatorship seem like anything but a positive development. Whether the promised democratic transition will happen remains to be seen, but all this has been enough for the Gabonese people to finally see the possibility of "a better and brighter future".

Germany

If Germany is supposed to be the shining example of learning from one's own fascist past, then we need better role models. A convalescence of pro-Putin, anti-vaccine and racist fanatics has brought the far-right to new heights of support, even tempting over the more nationalistic figures of the socialist movement. When German people attempt to educate each other, as Lina E. did during her anti-fascist actions, the state suppresses them; after all, it cares more for maintaining its precious monopoly on violence than exacting justice against those that threaten our very lives.

Greece

As mountains burn and valleys flood, it seems as though Tartarus has made a new home on Earth. Legitimised by fraudulent elections, the Mitsotakis government has become a force of unmitigated evil, dedicating itself to drowning refugees in the sea while its leaves Greeks to suffer climate collapse and capitalist barbarism. As the left-wing opposition has fractured into pieces, the response to this massive crisis has been left once again to the anarchists, always among the first responders in disaster relief efforts and on the front line against the violence of their authoritarian government. As each day passes, revolution against this regime of death seems increasingly necessary.

Image: Makis Theodorou

Guatemala

The Caribbean call for reparations is only getting louder. The Co-operative Republic of Guyana is now pursuing its case against the Gladstone family, the key profiteers of the slave economy that the nation was subjected to. The Gladstones have apologised, but words are not enough. They and every other family that grew rich off slavery should put their money where their mouth is and give back what they have stolen. The United Kingdom cannot ignore this any longer.

Image: Chris Leung

Kenya

For decades Kenya has been subjected to predatory "structural adjustment" loans by neocolonial institutions, which have trapped the country in deep amounts of debt. In a scramble to pay these debts, successive right-wing governments have passed the cost on to regular people through a rising cost of living and higher taxation, while the British imperial troops that still occupy the country continue to attack the Kenyan people and degrade their lands. People protesting against this state of affairs have been met by police brutality, but they press on. Kenyan calls for debt relief must be answered. The colonial exploitation of Kenya needs to end.

Mexico

In Chiapas, the Zapatistas once again find themselves under siege. Their opposition to the capitalist state and the criminal cartels has brought them under constant attack from multiple fronts; with their solidarity networks surveilled by authorities, their means of communication harassed by trolls, and their communities violently assaulted by paramilitary gangs. The Zapatista communities must be supported in whatever way we can. Against the state and its violence, our greatest weapon is solidarity.

Image: Agustine Sacha

Montenegro

Another autocrat ousted. Milo Đukanović, who has ruled Montenegro since the fall of Yugoslavia in 1991, was finally removed by popular vote. For decades, Đukanović's regime has presided over a massive wave of privatisation, creating an intrenched oligarchy composed of his own family, crony capitalists and mafia clients. He and his collaborators have stolen everything from the Montenegrin people, and hidden their looted assets away in the offshore banks of the British Virgin Islands. The fight against corruption in the country has only just begun. It can only end when the people take back what is rightfully theirs.

Niger

What started as a coup against the pro-French president Mohamed Bazoum has quickly taken on the characteristics of a popular revolt against French colonialism. The anti-imperialist M62 Movement has seized the moment to renew their struggle against the French Empire, blockading the colonisers' military bases and protesting outside the symbols of their hegemonic power. The French government, terrified of ending another military occupation and the uranium extraction it enables, has responded by feverishly backing an invasion of the country. This cannot succeed, the Nigerien people will not allow it. A bas la Françafrique!

Pakistan

The Civic-Military dictatorship is consolidating its power. Egged on by their imperial backers in the United States, the government of Pakistan has intensified attacks against any opposition to its rule. While deposed prime minister Imran Khan is imprisoned for criticising the military regime, Khan's own staunchest critics now find themselves unable to even criticise him, banned from mentioning his name on public media. With the political opposition suppressed and the very National Assembly that enabled this coup now dissolved, Pakistani anarcho-syndicalists present a true opposition, one that attacks the very foundations of power that allowed all of this to take place.

Palestine

As violence by settler colonist militias spirals out of control, the Israeli state itself launched a massive assault against the Palestinian refugee camp at Jenin, killing people and displacing many more. The murder of Palestinians by Israeli forces is becoming regular news, and the further occupation of Palestinian land is only spurred forward by Israel's far-right government. But the United Kingdom has brazenly ignored all these criminal reports and moved to block any action against it in the International Court of Justice. More than ever before, Palestine needs allies.

Image: EPA

Russia

Putin's regime is on shakier ground than ever. The imperialist invasion against Ukraine has faltered, scores of people are fleeing the country, and more and more oligarchs are tripping out of windows. After the fascist Wagner Group carried out one of the most farcical and short-lived rebellions in history, their entire command spontaneously exploded in the sky. The regime has resorted to grovelling to North Korea for weapons and misleading Cubans into fighting as mercenaries in Ukraine. Anarchist attacks against the state only continue, as Russian libertarians prepare for the coming collapse of everything they have fought against for so long.

Serbia

After mass shooters killed and injured dozens in a series of shootings, the Serbian people reacted as any reasonable people would, by marching in the streets calling for the resignation of the entire government. Such a culture of violence has been long cultivated by the country's government and its media, which are now under intense popular scrutiny for their complicity in the massacres. The anti-violence protests were also joined by the political opposition and an alliance of farmers, who blockaded the roads in protest against the rising cost of living. The current regime isn't quite as secure as it thought.

Spain

It seemed like Spain was doomed to return to fascism, but Spanish anti-fascists still have fight left in them: Barcelona's squatters have defended themselves against the onslaught of the fascist street gang Desokupa; feminists have struck out against the institutional power of violent machismo; and anarcho-syndicalists have formed a historic accord of joint struggle against capitalism. Meanwhile the Spanish far-right is in disarray, falling to infighting after failing to take power in an electoral coup they thought they were destined to win. The words "No pasarán" still reverberate around the country. Iberia still has a chance to bury fascism.

Sudan

The Revolution is being suffocated, as the two surviving factions of the old regime vie for control over the remains of the Sudanese state. The fascist Janjaweed militias have cut a path of massacre and devastation through the provinces of Darfur and Kordofan in their bid to take the capital Khartoum. In the face of this offensive, the Revolutionary Front are attempting to defend their people against these worshippers of death; and the Resistance Committees are stretched thin providing medical relief to the people caught in the crossfire. Anarchists still in the capital are just trying to survive, while the international movement does its best to aid those that managed to flee.

Thailand

It's one step forward and two steps back. On the back of mass discontent with the monarchist-militarist regime, the reformist Move Forward party was swept to the top of the polls. Terrified of the possibility that people might soon be able to openly criticise the monarchy, and that the proposals of decentralisation and demilitarisation might actually change things, the "liberals" made a cynical deal to take power with those that had overthrown them twice over. If the state will not budge, it will have to be the Thai people themselves that move their country forward. Fuck Politics. Fuck the Army. Fuck the King.

Tunisia

With the leaders of the opposition now locked behind bars, Tunisia's new dictator Kais Saied has hammered the final nails into the revolution's coffin. The so-called "democratic" governments to the north of the Mediterranean have turned their backs on democracy, now working together with the regime in order to fight against their common enemy: refugees. Saied's dictatorship has happily taken the well-paid job as enforcer of international racism, leaving refugees to die in the middle of the desert and allowing pirates free reign to plunder the boats that make it off the North African coast. Murder is the rule of the day on both sides of the sea.

7 STEPS TO ORGANIZING A LOCAL FOOD NOT BOMBS GROUP

At the outset, starting a Food Not Bombs might seem like more than you can handle.Work on the basics, taking one step at a time. There is no need to feel pressured into accomplishing everything all at once. It might take a couple of weeks to get things rolling, or it may take months. One person cannot be a Food Not Bombs group, but one person can initiate a group.

Once you have made the decision to start a local Food Not Bombs group, pick a meeting date, time, and place and gather together everyone interested to talk about what you would like to do. You might start with a group of friends, or members of an existing group, or it could be people who respond to posters and emails announcing your intentions.

The following is a step-by-step process to get your food operation up and running. Because of your unique situation, you may need to add, ignore or reorder steps. Follow the path you feel will work best for your group.

Step 1: Start by getting a phone number, email or postal address. You might always want to set up a Tik-tok, Insta, Facebook, Twitter or other website for your group.

Some groups use a commercial mailbox or post office box for their physical address. When you set up your contact information you can ask to have it posted on the contact pages of www.foodnotbombs.net so people can find out how to reach your chapter. The website also provides a wiki, alliance and other self posting sites for you to post your contact information.

Step 2: Make flyers announcing the existence of your new local Food Not Bombs chapter with your contact information and time, date and location of your planning meetings. By handing out these flyers at events, posting them around town, emailing the announcement of your next meeting to friends, classmates and other local organizations you will get additional volunteers and donations of food and supplies.

It is helpful to have regularly scheduled weekly or monthly meetings and always know the date of the next one to share at the end of each meeting. Encourage people who may rely on the food to participate in the meetings. Post the time, date and location of your meetings on your websites. You can find sample flyers that you can down load on www.foodnotbombs.net.

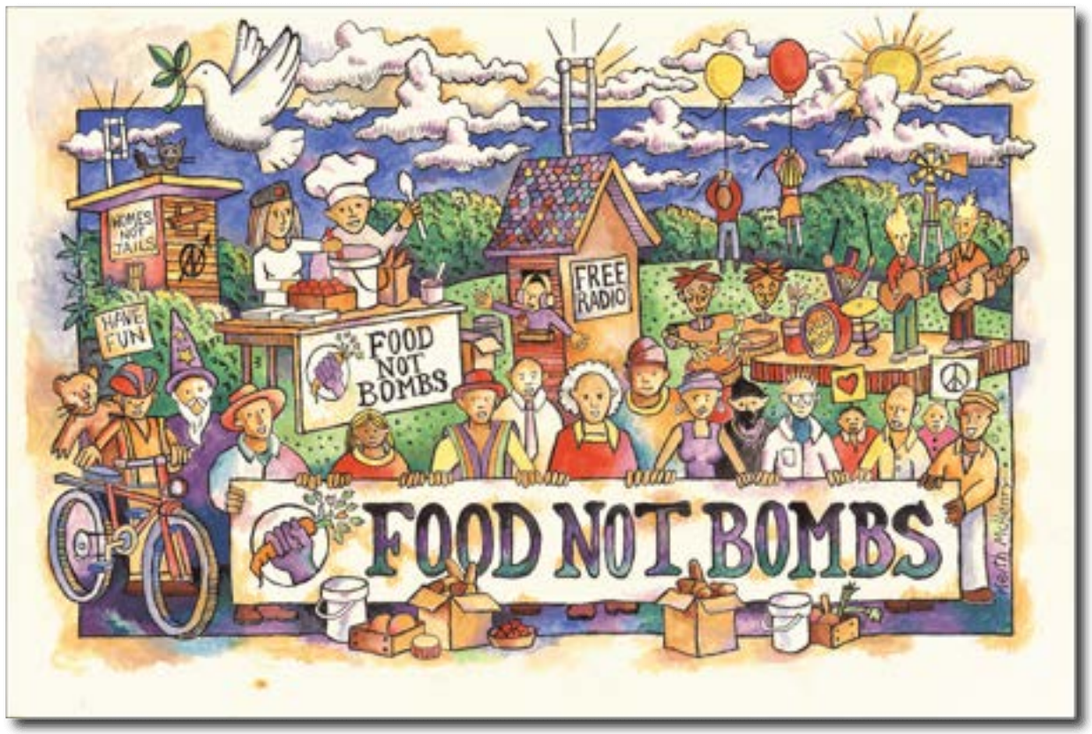
The agenda for your first meetings can include a.) food collection b.) location for cooking c.) locations to deliver your food. d.) consider a location to share your meals in the future e.) outreach to people who may want to volunteer and join the meal.

Step 3: Arrange for the use of a vehicle. Among the members of your group, there might be enough vehicles of the right size for your needs, but if not, you might be able to borrow a van or truck from a sympathetic church group or similar organization. If none of the above succeeds, you can always hold fund-raising events specifically for the purchase of a van or truck. Some groups use bicycles and bike carts. Other groups use shopping carts and travel on public transportation. Find what works.

Step 4: With flyers in hand, begin looking for sources of food. The first places to approach are the local food co-ops, produce warehouses, farmers markets, organic food stores and bakeries. These types of stores tend to be supportive and are a good place to practice your approach. Tell them you plan to share the food with the hungry, delivering food to shelters and soup kitchens as well as providing a regular meal once the chapter is established, and if they are interested and willing, arrange for a regular time to pick up the food each week or as often as is practical. Where it is appropriate, leave literature which explains the mission of Food Not Bombs.

Step 5: Start by delivering your collected food to housing projects, shelters and local meal programs. It is important to get to know the food banks and soup kitchens in your area. Learn where they are located, whom they serve, and how many they serve. This information will help you plan your delivery route and distribute the appropriate types and amounts of food to each program. This will also give you an idea of when and where your chapter should start to share your regular prepared meals. It is usually desirable to arrange a regular delivery schedule with each location. Building relationships with the other food programs is valuable.

Step 6: Once this network becomes established, start to skim some food out of the flow without disrupting the program. With this food, prepare meals to serve on the streets with literature about Food Not Bombs as well as current issues and related events. It can be very helpful to share meals at rallies and demonstrations first; there your group can recruit more volunteers, collect donations, as well as lift the spirits of those participating in the action. Giving out meals at a protest can build community and supports the cause in a very direct way.



Step 7: Once enough people are involved, consider sharing meals in a visible way one day a week to the hungry on the streets. Cooking and serving food there builds community within the group and is hard work, but this is also great fun. Choose a time, day and location where you will reach the most people. Always be on time. Pick highly visible locations where a diverse population is likely to walk past your food and literature.

One aspect of our mission is to help make the "invisible poverty" more visible. The meal and literature can be a powerful way to reach out to the community with the message of "food not bombs."

SAMPLE AGENDA

7:00 to 7:15 - Introductions
7:15 to 7:30 - Contacting food sources
7:30 to 7:45 - Visiting local foodback
7:45 to 8:00 - Locating a kitchen
8:00 to 8:15- Choosing a visibile serving location
8:15 to 8:30 - Choosing contact information
8:30 to 8:45 - Set day and time to make your banner
8:45 to 9:00 - Posting flyers & media promo
9:00 to 9:15 - Plan a benefit concert
9:15 to 9:30 - AOB & Next Meeting

These are just ideas and any one of them could take an entire meeting. Plan accordingly and prepare to adapt!

THE THREE PRINCIPLES OF FNB

ALWAYS VEGAN OR VEGETARIAN AND FREE
Our food is vegan or vegetarian and free to anyone without restriction, rich or poor, stoned or sober. First, the potential for problems with food spoilage are greatly reduced when dealing strictly with plant based foods. Second, we want our food to reflect our dedication to nonviolence and that included violence against all beings including animals. We only prepare food which is strictly from plant sources so people will always know and trust Food Not Bombs that our food is safe and nonviolent.

At times, we do get donations of dairy and meat products which might and redirect it to soup kitchens that aren't vegetarian because we believe eating is more important than being politically pure; however, we NEVER cook with animal products ourselves and only share breads that might have dairy when it is not possible to know for sure.

AUTONOMY & CONSENSUS
Each Food Not Bombs chapter is autonomous and uses a process of consensus to make decisions. There are no leaders, presidents or directors, and no headquarters. Everyone in each chapter is encouraged to participate in the decision making including those who depend on Food Not Bombs for their meals. Your chapter may meet once a week or once a month but no one volunteer is empowered to tell the rest of the group how it is to operate and there is no headquarters to direct the activities of any chapter. The process of consensus is not voting or the use of "Robert's Rules of Order" where a majority determine the decisions. In consensus a decisions is not made until the proposal is one that everyone participating supports and can feel good giving their consent. There are a number of resources to help your chapter learn to use consensus on the web and you can also request support from volunteers who have been active in other Food Not Bombs groups.

DEDICATED TO NONVIOLENCE
Food Not Bombs is not a charity but is dedicated to using nonviolent direct action to change society. Our volunteers not only provide meals to the hungry on the streets and at protests we also participate in planning and implementing campaigns of nonviolent direct action. Our volunteers helped organize and provided meals to activists at blockades, sit-ins, strikes, marches, tree sits and lock downs. Our actions can involve art, music, puppets, banners and many other creative strategies.

Our volunteers have provided food to workers and their families while on strike and they have smuggled food into factory and office occupations. Food Not Bombs volunteers can help facilitate Nonviolence Trainings to prepare for campaigns of non-cooperation and nonviolent resistance. There is nothing passive about nonviolent direct action.

Food is a right, not a privilege! ■

(Developed from a text by Food Not Bombs Arroyo Seco)
www.foodnotbombs.net

AFFINITY GROUPS

Turbulent times are upon us. Already, blockades, demonstrations, riots, and clashes are occuring regularly. It's past time to be organizing for the upheavals that are on the way.

But getting organized doesn't mean joining a pre-existing institution and taking orders. It shouldn't mean forfeiting your agency and intelligence to become a cog in a machine. From an anarchist perspective, organizational structure should maximize both freedom and voluntary coordination at every level of scale, from the smallest group up to society as a whole.

You and your friends already constitute an affinity group, the essential building block of this model. An affinity group is a circle of friends who understand themselves as an autonomous political force. The idea is that people who already know and trust each other should work together to respond immediately, intelligently, and flexibly to emerging situations.

This leaderless format has proven effective for guerrilla activities of all kinds, as well as what the RAND Corporation calls "swarming" tactics in which many unpredictable autonomous groups overwhelm a centralized adversary. You should go to every demonstration in an affinity group, with a shared sense of your goals and capabilities. If you are in an affinity group that has experience taking action together, you will be much better prepared to deal with emergencies and make the most of unexpected opportunities.

Affinity Groups are Powerful

Relative to their small size, affinity groups can achieve a disproportionately powerful impact. In contrast to traditional top-down structures, they are free to adapt to any situation, they need not pass their decisions through a complicated process of ratification, and all the participants can act and react instantly without waiting for orders—yet with a clear idea of what to expect from one another. The mutual admiration and inspiration on which they are founded make them very difficult to demoralize. In stark contrast to capitalist, fascist, and socialist structures, they function without any need of hierarchy or coercion. Participating in an affinity group can be fulfilling and fun as well as effective.

Most important of all, affinity groups are motivated by shared desire and loyalty, rather than profit, duty, or any other compensation or abstraction. Small wonder whole squads of riot police have been held at bay by affinity groups armed with only the tear gas canisters shot at them.

The Affinity Group is a Flexible Model

Some affinity groups are formal and immersive: the participants live together, sharing everything in common. But an affinity group need not be a permanent arrangement. It can serve as a structure of convenience, assembled from the pool of interested and trusted people for the duration of a given project.

A particular team can act together over and over as an affinity group, but the members can also break up into smaller affinity groups, participate in other affinity groups, or act outside the affinity group structure. Freedom to associate and organize as each person sees fit is a fundamental anarchist principle; this promotes redundancy, so no one person or group is essential to the functioning of the whole, and different groups can reconfigure as needed.

Pick the Scale That's Right for You

An affinity group can range from two to perhaps as many as fifteen individuals, depending on your goals. However, no group should be so numerous that an informal conversation about pressing matters is impossible. You can always split up into two or more groups if need be. In actions that require driving, the easiest system is often to have one affinity group to each vehicle.

Get to Know Each Other Intimately

Learn each other's strengths and vulnerabilities and backgrounds, so you know what you can count on each other for. Discuss your analyses of each situation you are entering and what is worth accomplishing in it—identify where they match, where they are complentary, and where they differ, so you'll be ready to make split-second decisions.

One way to develop political intimacy is to read and discuss texts together, but nothing beats on-the-ground experience. Start out slow so you don't overextend. Once you've established a common language and healthy internal dynamics, you're ready to identify the objectives you want to accomplish, prepare a plan, and go into action.

Decide Your Appropriate Level of Security

Affinity groups are resistant to infiltration because all members share history and intimacy with each other, and no one outside the group need be informed of their plans or activities.

Once assembled, an affinity group should establish a shared set of security practices and stick to them. In some cases, you can afford to be public and transparent about your activities. in other cases, whatever goes on within the group should never be spoken of outside it, even after all its activities are long completed. In some cases, no one except the participants in the group should know that it exists at all. You and your comrades can discuss and prepare for actions without acknowledging to outsiders that you constitute an affinity group. Remember, it is easier to pass from a high security protocol to a low one than vice versa.

Make Decisions Together

Affinity groups generally operate on via consensus decision-making: decisions are made collectively according to the needs and desires of every individual involved. Democratic voting, in which the majority get their way and the minority must hold their tongues, is anathema to affinity groups—for if a group is to function smoothly and hold together under stress, every individual involved must be satisfied.

Before any action, the members of a group should establish together what their personal and collective goals are, what risks they are comfortable taking, and what their expectations of each other are. These matters determined, they can formulate a plan.

Since action situations are always unpredictable and plans rarely come off as anticipated, it may help to employ a dual approach to preparing. On the one hand, you can make plans for different scenarios: If A happens, we'll inform each other by X means and switch to plan B; if X means of communication is impossible, we'll reconvene at site Z at Q o'clock. On the other hand, you can put structures in place that will be useful even if what happens is unlike any of the scenarios you imagined. This could mean preparing resources (such as banners, medical supplies, or offensive equipment), dividing up internal roles (for example, scouting, communications, medic, media liaison), establishing communication systems (such as burner phones or coded phrases that can be shouted out to convey information securely), preparing general strategies (for keeping sight of one another in confusing environments, for example), charting emergency escape routes, or readying legal support in case anyone is arrested.

After an action, a shrewd affinity group will meet (if necessary, in a secure location without any electronics) to discuss what went well, what could have gone better, and what comes next.

Tact and Tactics

An affinity group answers to itself alone—this is one of its strengths. Affinity groups are not burdened by the procedural protocol of other organizations, the difficulties of reaching agreement with strangers, or

the limitations of answering to a body not immediately involved in the action.

At the same time, just as the members of an affinity group strive for consensus with each other, each affinity group should strive for a similarly considerate relationship with other individuals and groups—or at least to complement others' approaches, even if others do not recognize the value of this contribution. Ideally, most people should be glad of your affinity group's participation or intervention in a situation, rather than resenting or fearing you. They should come to recognize the value of the affinity group model, and so to employ it themselves, after seeing it succeed and benefiting from that success.

Organize With Other Affinity Groups

An affinity group can work together with other affinity groups in what is sometimes called a cluster. The cluster formation enables a larger number of individuals to act with the same advantages a single affinity group has. If speed or security is called for, representatives of each group can meet ahead of time, rather than the entirety of all groups; if coordination is of the essence, the groups or representatives can arrange methods for communicating through the heat of the action. Over years of collaborating together, different affinity groups can come to know each other as well as they know themselves, becoming accordingly more comfortable and capable together.

When several clusters of affinity groups need to coordinate especially massive actions—before a big demonstration, for example—they can hold a spokescouncil meeting at which different affinity groups and clusters can inform one another (to whatever extent is wise) of their intentions. Spokescouncils rarely produce seamless unanimity, but they can apprise the participants of the various desires and perspectives that are at play. The independence and spontaneity that decentralization provides are usually our greatest advantages in combat with a better equipped adversary.
Bottomlining

For affinity groups and larger structures based on consensus and cooperation to function, it is essential that everyone involved be able to rely on each other to come through on commitments. When a plan is agreed upon, each individual in a group and each group in a cluster should choose one or more critical aspects of the preparation and execution of the plan and offer to bottomline them. Bottomlining the supplying of a resource or the completion of a project means guaranteeing that it will be accomplished somehow, no matter what. If you're operating the legal hotline for your group during a demonstration, you owe it to them to handle it even if you get sick; if your group promises to provide the banners for an action, make sure they're ready, even if that means staying up all night the night before because the rest of your affinity group couldn't show up. Over time, you'll learn how to handle crises and who you can count on in them—just as others will learn how much they can count on you.

Go Into Action

Stop wondering what's going to happen, or why nothing's happening. Get together with your friends and start deciding what will happen. Don't go through life in passive spectator mode, waiting to be told what to do. Get in the habit of discussing what you want to see happen—and making those ideas reality.

Without a structure that encourages ideas to flow into action, without comrades with whom to brainstorm and barnstorm and build up momentum, you are likely to be paralyzed, cut off from much of your own potential; with them, your potential can be multiplied by ten, or ten thousand. "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world," Margaret Mead wrote: "it's the only thing that ever has." She was referring, whether she knew it or not, to affinity groups. If every individual in every action against the state and status quo participated as part of a tight-knit, dedicated affinity group, the revolution would be accomplished in a few short years.

An affinity group could be a sewing circle or a bicycle maintenance collective; it could come together for the purpose of providing a meal at an occupation or forcing a multinational corporation out of business through a carefully orchestrated program of sabotage. Affinity groups have planted and defended community gardens, built and occupied and burned down buildings, organized neighborhood childcare programs and wildcat strikes; individual affinity groups routinely initiate revolutions in the visual arts and popular music. Your favorite band was an affinity group. An affinity group invented the airplane. Another one maintains this website.

Let five people meet who are resolved to the lightning of action rather than the agony of survival—from that moment, despair ends and tactics begin.

This guide is adapted from an earlier version that appeared in Recipes for Disaster: An Anarchist Cookbook. ■

CrimethInc

Tachyon Prince
August 2023

ANARCHISM AS A THEORY OF ORGANIZATION

You may think in describing anarchism as a theory of organisation I am propounding a deliberate paradox: "anarchy" you may consider to be, by definition, the opposite of organisation. In fact, however, "anarchy" means the absence of government, the absence of authority. Can there be social organisation without authority, without government? The anarchists claim that there can be, and they also claim that it is desirable that there should be. They claim that, at the basis of our social problems is the principle of government. It is, after all, governments which prepare for war and wage war, even though you are obliged to fight in them and pay for them; the bombs you are worried about are not the bombs which cartoonists attribute to the anarchists, but the bombs which governments have perfected, at your expense. It is, after all, governments which make and enforce the laws which enable the 'haves' to retain control over social assets rather than share them with the 'have-nots'. It is, after all, the principle of authority which ensures that people will work for someone else for the greater part of their lives, not because they enjoy it or have any control over their work, but because they see it as their only means of livelihood.

I said that it is governments which make wars and prepare for wars, but obviously it is not governments alone — the power of a government, even the most absolute dictatorship, depends on the tacit assent of the governed. Why do people consent to be governed? It isn't only fear: what have millions of people to fear from a small group of politicians? It is because they subscribe to the same values as their governors. Rulers and ruled alike believe in the principle of authority, of hierarchy, of power. These are the characteristics of the political principle. The anarchists, who have always distinguished between the state and society, adhere to the social principle, which can be seen where-ever men link themselves in an association based on a common need or a common interest. "The State" said the German anarchist Gustav Landauer, "is not something which can be destroyed by a revolution, but is a condition, a certain relationship between human beings, a mode of human behaviour; we destroy it by contracting other relationships, by behaving differently."

Anyone can see that there are at least two kinds of organisation. There is the kind which is forced on you, the kind which is run from above, and there is the kind which is run from below, which can't force you to do anything, and which you are free to join or free to leave alone. We could say that the anarchists are people who want to transform all kinds of human organisation into the kind of purely voluntary association where people can pull out and start one of their own if they don't like it. I once, in reviewing that frivolous but useful little book Parkinson's Law, attempted to enunciate four principles behind an anarchist theory of organisation: that they should be (1) voluntary, (2) functional, (3) temporary, and (4) small.

They should be voluntary for obvious reasons. There is no point in our advocating individual freedom and responsibility if we are going to advocate organisations for which membership is mandatory.

They should be functional and temporary precisely because permanence is one of those factors which harden the arteries of an organisation, giving it a vested interest in its own survival, in serving the interests of office-holders rather than its function.

They should be small precisely because in small face-to-face groups, the bureaucratising and hierarchical tendencies inherent in organisations have least opportunity to develop. But it is from this final point that our difficulties arise. If we take it for granted that a small group can function anarchically, we are still faced with the problem of all those social functions for which organisation is necessary, but which require it on a much bigger scale. "Well," we might reply, as some anarchists have, "if big organisations are necessary, count us out. We will get by as well as we can without them." We can say this all right, but if we are propagating anarchism as a social philosophy we must take into account, and not evade, social facts. Better to say "Let us find ways in which the large-scale functions can be broken down into functions capable of being organised by small functional groups and then link these groups in a federal manner." The classical anarchist thinkers, envisaging the future organisation of society, thought in terms of two kinds of social institution: as the territorial unit, the commune, a French word which you might consider as the equivalent of the word 'parish' or the Russian word 'soviet' in its original meaning, but which also has overtones of the ancient village institutions for cultivating the land in common; and the syndicate, another French word from trade union terminology, the syndicate or workers' council as the unit of industrial organisation. Both were envisaged as small local units which would federate with each other for the larger affairs of life, while retaining their own autonomy, the one federating territorially and the other industrially.

The nearest thing in ordinary political experience, to the federative principle propounded by Proudhon and Kropotkin would be the Swiss, rather than the American, federal system. And without wishing to sing a song of praise for the Swiss political system, we can see that the 22 independent cantons of Switzerland are a successful federation. It is a federation of like units, of small cells, and the cantonal boundaries cut across linguistic and ethnic boundaries so that, unlike the many unsuccessful federations, the confederation is not dominated by one or a few powerful units. For the problem of federation, as Leopold Kohr puts it in The Breakdown of Nations, is one of division, not of union. Herbert Luethy writes of his country's political system:

Every Sunday, the inhabitants of scores of communes go to the polling booths to elect their civil servants, ratify such and such an item of expenditure, or decide whether a road or a school should be built; after settling the business of the commune, they deal with cantonal elections and voting on cantonal issues; lastly... come the decisions on federal issues. In some cantons, the sovereign people still meet in Rousseau-like fashion to discuss questions of common interest. It may be thought that this ancient form of assembly is no more than a pious tradition with a certain value as a tourist attraction. If so, it is worth looking at the results of local democracy.

The simplest example is the Swiss railway system, which is the densest network in the world. At great cost and with great trouble, it has been made to serve the needs of the smallest localities and most remote valleys, not as a paying proposition but because such was the will of the people. It is the outcome of fierce political struggles. In the 19th century, the "democratic railway movement" brought the small Swiss communities into conflict with the big towns, which had plans for centralisation...

And if we compare the Swiss system with the French which, with admirable geometrical regularity, is entirely centred on Paris so that the prosperity or the decline, the life or death of whole regions has depended on the quality of the link with the capital, we see the difference between a centralised state and a federal alliance. The railway map is the easiest to read at a glance, but let us now superimpose on it another showing economic activity and the movement of population. The distribution of industrial activity all over Switzerland, even in the outlying areas, accounts for the strength and stability of the social structure of the country and prevented those horrible 19th century concentrations of industry, with their slums and rootless proletariat.

I quote all this, as I said, not to praise Swiss democracy, but to indicate that the federal principle which is at the heart of anarchist social theory, is worth much more attention than it is given in the textbooks on political science. Even in the context of ordinary political institutions its adoption has a far-reaching effect. Another anarchist theory of organisation is what we might call the theory of spontaneous order: that given a common need, a collection of people will, by trial and error, by improvisation and experiment, evolve order out of chaos — this order being more durable and more

closely related to their needs than any kind of externally imposed order.

Kropotkin derived this theory from the observations of the history of human society and of social biology which led to his book Mutual Aid, and it has been observed in most revolutionary situations, in the ad hoc organisations which spring up after natural catastrophes, or in any activity where there is no existing organisational form or hierarchical authority. This concept was given the name Social Control in the book of that title by Edward Allsworth Ross, who cited instances of "frontier" societies where, through unorganised or informal measures, order is effectively maintained without benefit of constituted authority: "Sympathy, sociability, the sense of justice and resentment are competent, under favourable circumstances, to work out by themselves a true, natural order, that is to say, an order without design or art."

An interesting example of the working-out of this theory was the Pioneer Health Centre at Peckham, London, started in the decade before the war by a group of physicians and biologists who wanted to study the nature of health and healthy behaviour instead of studying ill-health like the rest of their profession. They decided that the way to do this was to start a social club whose members joined as families and could use a variety of facilities including a swimming bath, theatre, nursery and cafeteria, in return for a family membership subscription and for agreeing to periodic medical examinations. Advice, but not treatment, was given. In order to be able to draw valid conclusions the Peckham biologists thought it necessary that they should be able to observe human beings who were free — free to act as they wished and to give expression to their desires. So there were no rules and no leaders. "I was the only person with authority," said Dr. Scott Williamson, the founder, "and I used it to stop anyone exerting any authority." For the first eight months there was chaos. "With the first member-families", says one observer, "there arrived a horde of undisciplined children who used the whole building as they might have used one vast London street. Screaming and running like hooligans through all the rooms, breaking equipment and furniture," they made life intolerable for everyone. Scott Williamson, however, "insisted that peace should be restored only by the response of the children to the variety of stimuli that was placed in their way," and, "in less than a year the chaos was reduced to an order in which groups of children could daily be seen swimming, skating, riding bicycles, using the gymnasium or playing some game, occasionally reading a book in the library ... the running and screaming were things of the past."

More dramatic examples of the same kind of phenomenon are reported by those people who have been brave enough, or confident enough to institute self-governing non-punitive communities of delinquents or maladjusted children: August Aichhorn and Homer Lane are examples. Aichhorn ran that famous institution in Vienna, described in his book Wayward Youth. Homer Lane was the man who, after experiments in America started in Britain a community of juvenile delinquents, boys and girls, called The Little Commonwealth. Lane used to declare that "Freedom cannot be given. It is taken by the child in discovery and invention." True to this principle, remarks Howard Jones, "he refused to impose upon the children a system of government copied from the institutions of the adult world. The self-governing structure of the Little Commonwealth was evolved by the children themselves, slowly and painfully to satisfy their own needs."

Anarchists believe in leaderless groups, and if this phrase is familiar to you it is because of the paradox that what was known as the leaderless group technique was adopted in the British and American armies during the war — as a means of selecting leaders. The military psychiatrists learned that leader or follower traits are not exhibited in isolation. They are, as one of them wrote, "relative to a specific social situation — leadership varied from situation to situation and from group to group." Or as the anarchist Michael Bakunin put it a hundred years ago, "I receive and I give — such is human life. Each directs and is directed in his turn. Therefore there is no fixed and constant authority, but a continual exchange of mutual, temporary, and, above all, voluntary authority and subordination."

This point about leadership was well put in John Comerford's book, Health the Unknown, about the Peckham experiment:

Accustomed as is this age to artificial leadership... it is difficult for it to realise the truth that leaders require no training or appointing, but emerge spontaneously when conditions require them. Studying their members in the free-for-all of the Peckham Centre, the observing scientists saw over and over again how one member instinctively became, and was instinctively but not officially recognised as, leader to meet the needs of one particular moment. Such leaders appeared and disappeared as the flux of the Centre required. Because they were not consciously appointed, neither (when they had fulfilled their purpose) were they consciously overthrown. Nor was any particular gratitude shown by members to a leader either at the time of his services or after for services rendered. They followed his guidance just as long as his guidance was helpful and what they wanted. They melted away from him without regrets when some widening of experience beckoned them on to some fresh adventure, which would in turn throw up its spontaneous leader, or when their self-confidence was such that any form of constrained leadership would have been a restraint to them. A society, therefore, if left to itself in suitable circumstances to express itself spontaneously works out its own salvation and achieves a harmony of action which superimposed leadership cannot emulate.

Don't be deceived by the sweet reasonableness of all this. This anarchist concept of leadership is quite revolutionary in its implications as you can see if you look around, for you see everywhere in operation the opposite concept: that of hierarchical, authoritarian, privileged and permanent leadership. There are very few comparative studies available of the effects of these two opposite approaches to the organisation of work. Two of them I will mention later; another, about the organisation of architects' offices was produced in 1962 for the Institute of British Architects under the title The Architect and His Oflice. The team which prepared this report found two different approaches to the design process, which gave rise to different ways of working and methods of organisation. One they categorised as centralised, which was characterised by autocratic forms of control, and the other they called dispersed, which promoted what they called "an informal atmosphere of free-flowing ideas." This is a very live issue among architects. Mr. W. D. Pile, who in an official capacity helped to sponsor the outstanding success of postwar British architecture, the school-building programme, specifies among the things he looks for in a member of the building team that: "He must have a belief in what I call the non-hierarchical organisation of the work. The work has got to be organised not on the star system, but on the repertory system. The team leader may often be junior to a team member. That will only be accepted if it is commonly accepted that primacy lies with the best idea and not with the senior man."

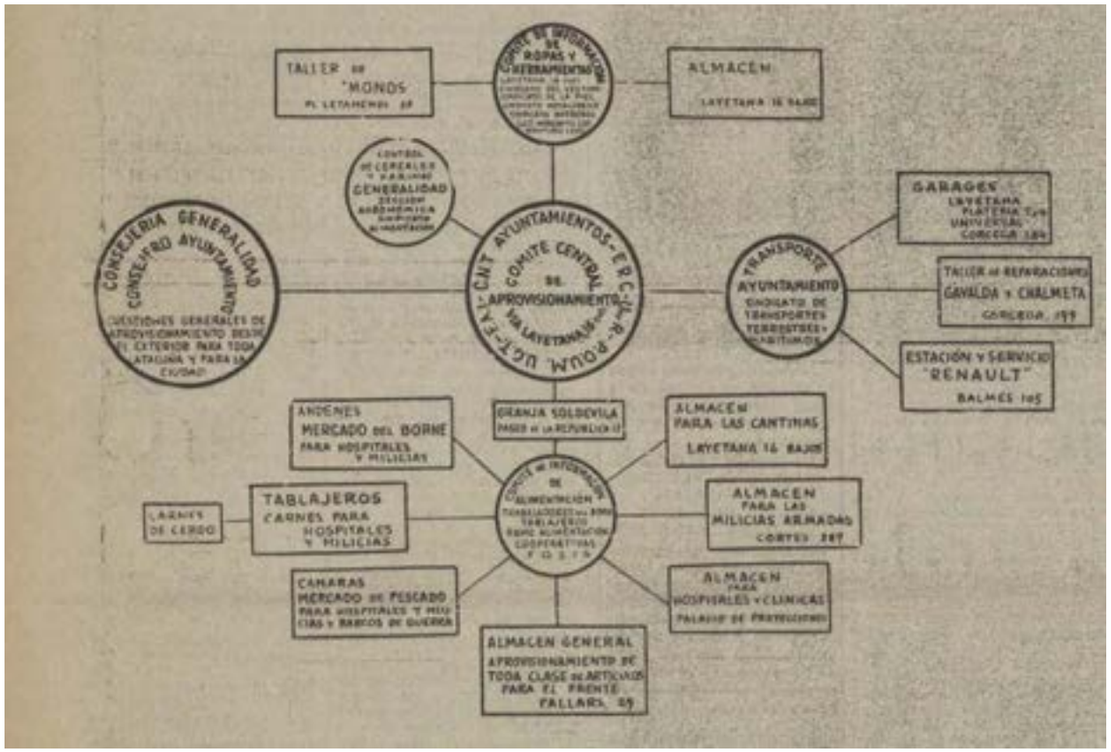
And one of our greatest architects, Walter Gropius, proclaims what he calls the technique of "collaboration among men, which would release the creative instincts of the individual instead of smothering them. The essence of such technique should be to emphasise individual freedom of initiative, instead of authoritarian direction by a boss... synchronizing individual effort by a continuous give and take of its members ..."
"This leads us to another corner-stone of anarchist theory, the idea of workers' control of industry. A great many people think that workers' control is an attractive idea, but one which is incapable of realisation (and consequently not worth fighting for) because of the scale and complexity of modern industry. How can we convince them otherwise? Apart from pointing out how changing sources of motive power make the geographical concentration of industry obsolete, and how changing methods of production make the concentration of vast numbers of people unnecessary, perhaps the best method of persuading people that workers' control is a feasible proposition in large-scale industry is through pointing to successful examples of what the guild socialists called "encroaching control." They are partial and limited in effect, as they are bound to be, since they operate within the conventional industrial structure, but they do indicate that workers have an organisational capacity on the shop floor, which most people deny that they possess.

Let me illustrate this from two recent instances in modern large-scale industry . The first, the gang system worked in Coventry, was described by an American professor of industrial and management engineering, Seymour Melman, in his book Decision-Making and Productivity. He sought, by a detailed comparison of the manufacture of a similar product, the Ferguson tractor, in Detroit and in Coventry, England, "to demonstrate that there are realistic alternatives to managerial rule over production." His account of the operation of the gang system was confirmed by a Coventry engineering

worker, Reg Wright, in two articles in Anarchy.

Of Standard's tractor factory in the period up to 1956 when it was sold, Melman writes: "In this firm we will show that at the same time: thousands of workers operated virtully without supervision as conventionally understood, and at high productivity; the highest wage in British industry was paid; high quality products were produced at acceptable prices in extensively mechanised plants; the management conducted its affairs at unusually low costs; also, organised workers had a substantial role in production decision-making." From the standpoint of the production workers, "the gang system leads to keeping track of goods instead of keeping track of people." Melman contrasts the "predatory competition" which characterises the managerial decision-making system with the workers' decision-making system in which "The most characteristic feature of the decision-formulating process is that of mutuality in decision-making with final authority residing in the hands of the grouped workers themselves." The gang system as he described it is very like the collective contract system advocated by G. D. H. Cole, who claimed that "The effect would be to link the members of the working group together in a common enterprise under their joint auspices and control, and to emancipate them from an externally imposed discipline in respect of their method of getting the work done."

My second example again derives from a comparative study of different methods of work organisation, made by the Tavistock Institute in the late 1950s, reported in E. L. Trist's Organisational Choice, and P. Herbst's Autonomous Group Functioning. Its importance can be seen from the opening words of the first of these: "This study concerns a group of miners who came together to evolve a new way of working together, planning the type of change they wanted to put through, and testing it in practice. The new type of work organisation which has come to be known in the industry as composite working, has in recent years emerged spontaneously in a number



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of different pits in the north-west Durham coal field. Its roots go back to an earlier tradition which had been almost completely displaced in the course of the last century by the introduction of work techniques based on task segmentation, differential status and payment, and extrinsic hierarchical control." The other report notes how the study showed "the ability of quite large primary work groups of 40–50 members to act as self-regulating, self-developing social organisms able to maintain themselves in a steady state of high productivity." The authors describe the system in a way which shows its relation to anarchists thought:

The composite work organisation may be described as one in which the group takes over complete responsibility for the total cycle of operations involved in mining the coal-face. No member of the group has a fixed workrole. Instead, the men deploy themselves, depending on the requirements of the on-going group task. Within the limits of technological and safety requirements they are free to evolve their own way of organising and carrying out their task. They are not subject to any external authority in this respect, nor is there within the group itself any member who takes over a formal directive leadership function. Whereas in conventional long-wall working the coal-getting task is split into four to eight separate work roles, carried out by different teams, each paid at a different rate, in the composite group members are no longer paid directly for any of the tasks carried out. The all-in wage agreement is, instead, based on the negotiated price per ton of coal produced by the team. The income obtained is divided equally among team members.

The works I have been quoting were written for specialists in productivity and industrial organisation, but their lessons are clear for people who are interested in the idea of workers' control. Faced with the objection that even though it can be shown that autonomous groups can organise themselves on a large scale and for complex tasks, it has not been shown that they can successfully co-ordinate, we resort once again to the federative principle. There is nothing outlandish about the idea that large numbers of autonomous industrial units can federate and co-ordinate their activities. If you travel across Europe you go over the lines of a dozen railway systems — capitalist and communist — co-ordinated by freely arrived at agreement between the various undertakings, with no central authority. You can post a letter to anywhere in the world, but there is no world postal authority, — representatives of different postal authorities simply have a congress every five years or so.

There are trends, observable in these occasional experiments in industrial organisation, in new approaches to problems of delinquency and addiction, in education and community organisation, and in the "de-institutionalisation" of hospitals, asylums, childrens' homes and so on, which have much in common with each other, and which run counter to the generally accepted ideas about organisation, authority and government. Cybernetic theory with its emphasis on self-organising systems, and speculation about the ultimate social effects of automation, leads in a similar revolutionary direction. George and Louise Crowley, for example, in their comments on the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Triple Revolution, (Monthly Review, Nov. 1964) remark that, "We find it no less reasonable to postulate a functioning society without authority than to postulate an orderly universe without a god. Therefore the word anarchy is not for us freighted with connotations of disorder, chaos, or confusion. For humane men, living in non-competitive conditions of freedom from toil and of universal affluence, anarchy is simply the appropriate state of society." In Britain, Professor Richard Titmuss remarks that social ideas may well be as important in the next half-century as technical innovation.

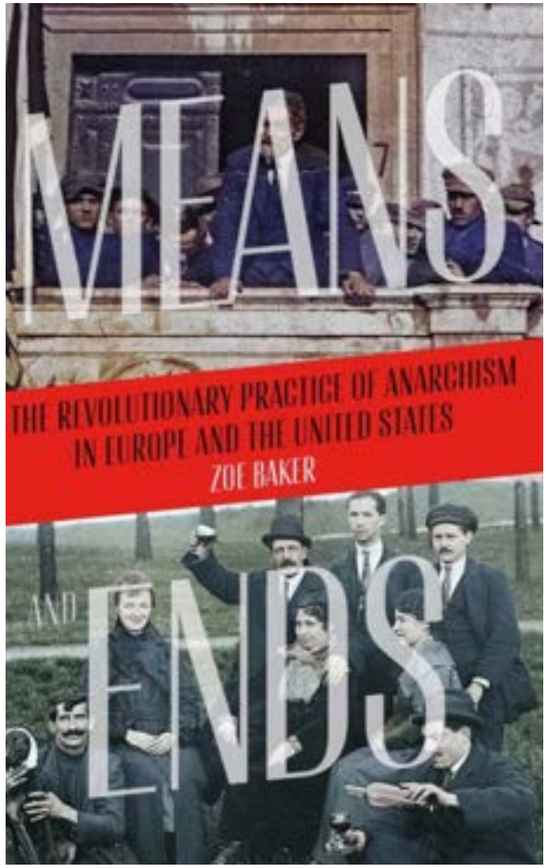
I believe that the social ideas of anarchism: autonomous groups, spontaneous order, workers' control, the federative principle, add up to a coherent theory of social organisation which is a valid and realistic alternative to the authoritarian, hierarchical and institutional social philosophy which we see in application all around us. Man will be compelled, Kropotkin declared, "to find new forms of organisation for the social functions which the State fulfils through the bureaucracy" and he insisted that "as long as this is not done nothing will be done." I think we have discovered what these new forms of organisation should be. We have now to make the opportunities for putting them into practice. ■

Review: Means and Ends

Anarchist historiography has always been in a particularly tense situation. Whether to write a history of anarchism as a historian in the modern academic mode – a mode characterised by attempts at dry abstraction from ideology, doomed to fail – or in an openly ideological fashion? Means and Ends, the new text by Zoe Baker, suggests a puissant approach: write the history according to the facts, and allow them to justify themselves ideologically, acknowledging one's own position beforehand.

Baker, perhaps known better to users of the internet by her long-time YouTube nom de plume 'anarchopac', has taken her first steps into mainstream publication with Means and Ends, an adaptation of a doctoral thesis on the history of anarchism as it evolved and presented itself within what might very loosely be called the West, from the 19th century onwards. Baker's stated aim for the text is to outline in relatively detailed strokes the origins of formal anarchism in these regions and then trace from the ideological and material positions the strategic beliefs that anarchisms did – and in many cases continue to – hold.

Great care has clearly been taken by both Baker and editors to revise the doctoral content into an accessible work; the title of this review is a testament to that success. Beginning with a strongly structured introductory chapter, the clarity and precision of the prose throughout the book is standout. Much as the balance between ideology and academy can introduce tensions in histories of this sort, so too can the balance between specialist terminology and the desire for the wider audience; Baker has found this balance excellently. Terminology specific to radical



positions and thinkers is introduced only when necessary and explained well, allowing even readers who are fairly inexperienced in dealing with the infamously sinuous prose of radicals to parse it easily.

The attempted historic distance also works in favour of the text. While it reveals the formal academic origins of the project – a project for which Baker tells the reader that debating whether or not anarchist theory is 'correct' is not the goal – it nevertheless allows the concepts and internal logic of the positions historical anarchist thinkers held to be presented on their own merits; merits which, to the surprise of very few reading Organise!, are often convincing without the need for polemical window dressing.

Another area in which the academic origin of the text is clear is the rigour of the scholarship; while I have no way of knowing this strictly, I would expect that Baker's doctoral thesis was an extremely successful submission, as the quality of the argumentation and citation given in the published version of the text is undeniable. The breadth of citation presented and the command over the utilised sources is enviable for any scholar, and despite this Means and Ends largely evades the tendency of heavily sourced work to become entangled in the minutiae of argumentation and dates, in favour of the aforementioned clarity that Baker's writing clearly possesses. Perhaps impossible to know, I would speculate that years producing digital content for the oft-uncharitable YouTube audience has honed Zoe Baker's sense of precision to an obsidian edge.

This precision and honesty leads to both the previously mentioned scholarship and clarity, but also to some moments of fairly impressive understatement; within the introduction, Baker references her own linguistic limitations as something that will prevent her from giving a thorough presentation of anarchist theory from all places, at all times; surely an admirable thing to mention, so avoid presenting a false impression to readers. This does not, however, prevent Baker from demonstrating a familiarity with a vast array of sources – within the first thirty pages alone, we have mentions and references to classic European stalwarts such as Kropotkin and Proudhon, as well as names that are frankly altogether unheard of to most anglophone readers; Kubo Yuzuru, Li Yaotang, and Anselme Bellegarrigue to name but a few. The irony of seeing these names alongside an apology for the limitations of the author's referencing is one of several moments of levity throughout the text.

Thus far, this review has been limited in its scope to an overview of the qualities of Means and Ends as a text being read; how is it presented, how grounded are its claims, what is the style, et cetera; until this point, nothing has been said in detail about the quality of the contents. The reason for this is simple; from the perspective of the anarchist reader, very little Baker says is shocking – it is, to quote from everyone's favourite not-actually-an-anarchist Noam Chomsky, 'uncontroversial' in nature. This is to be expected from a text that seeks to outline the roots of ideas in their material history for the wider public; many well read anarchists will already have a grasp on some of this material and the presentation is truly what makes this text stand out.

However, it would be remiss of a reviewer to simply leave the contents to themselves entirely; therefore, there are two major elements of Baker's text worth discussion from the perspective of an anarchist being read by other (probable) anarchists; firstly, her definition of anarchism in general.

Undoubtedly, anarchism as a political movement has several ideas attached to it in the general consciousness that aren't unique to any specific strain, but tendencies exist in vast numbers and the differences, while sometimes obscure, are often significant; Baker opts for a definition that is rooted very broadly in the common soil of leftist struggle – an anti-state form of revolutionary socialism, arising in Europe in the mid-19th Century in concert with the First International. Baker, therefore, has no time for proto-anarchists such as William Godwin, maybe-anarchists such as Proudhon, or the individualist anarchists which rise to prominence in the later 19th Century. Baker is careful to note that this is a practical decision, rather than being a 'claim to establish the one true version of anarchism' (44), and it is very true that care is taken throughout the text to avoid prescriptivism, but it is nevertheless one area in which Means and Ends is limited in scope. Of course, limitations in scope exist in all historical works as any truly universal text would be beyond the work of a lifetime, but given the current resurgence in popularity of individualist and insurrectionary anarchisms there is a mild conflict between the topic covered and Baker's stated intent to provide a means through which contemporary anarchists can 'learn valuable lessons and develop new ideas' (1).

Secondly, continuing from the mention of insurrectionary anarchism, Means and Ends does in fact contain discussion of this very tendency: Chapter Six is dedicated to it, in fact. It is somewhat disappointing, then, to see the ultimate conclusion of the chapter seemingly so contrary to the generally neutral approach taken elsewhere in the text; the final paragraph opening with the claim that 'it is fair to say that insurrectionist anarchism was unsuccessful' insofar as the stated aims of its proponents, and imploring the reader to 'understand insurrectionist anarchists on their own terms' (210). While inarguable that insurrectionary means did not lead to an anarchist world, it is somewhat surprising to see a text committed to providing opportunities for lessons so utterly direct in its conclusion on a particular strand; not least when

a later chapter devoted to syndicalism – a strain of thought that many, including figures such as Bonanno, believe to be ultimately inimical to the fundamental goals of the anti-state movement. After all, Bonanno tells us, 'it is impossible for anarchist comrades to join the government; but it happens'i – it is odd, then, to compare the blunt dismissal of insurrectionists with the altogether more measured evaluated of the many failures of the syndicalist movements, which spans three paragraphs and contains quotations from those unions themselves explaining their reactions to failure, and a brief summary of moments in which syndicalism might be said to have been successful in some measure after all.

Ultimately, though these critiques may seem extreme, I do not belief they are so consequential; there are concerns with this text, but these concerns may come from myself just as much as they do Baker – I am, I must confess, extremely sceptical of the syndicalist tradition myself and fond of the insurrectionary. It is altogether probably that if I were to write a history of the two, another could levy the same critique at me in reverse. It is, however, worth noting given the number of anarchists today who take influence from the insurrectionary elements and the relative contemporary weakness of the syndicalist movement, given Baker's express intent to provide the opportunity for lessons in the modern moment.

These minor critiques aside, the content of Means and Ends is as robust as its research and the argumentation is as clear as the general prose styling. While a book tackling such a tendentious topic at such length will always provide the opportunity for one group or another to take umbrage, the quality of Zoe Baker's debut work is fundamentally inescapable, and there is very little doubt that Means and Ends will join my shortlist of must-read histories of anarchism and the anarchist movement, taking pride of place alongside such well regarded classics as Peter Marshall's Demanding the Impossible. For any individual interested in the roots of the movement and how the material circumstances of those roots impacted the development of ideas and strategy, this text will more than satisfy. □

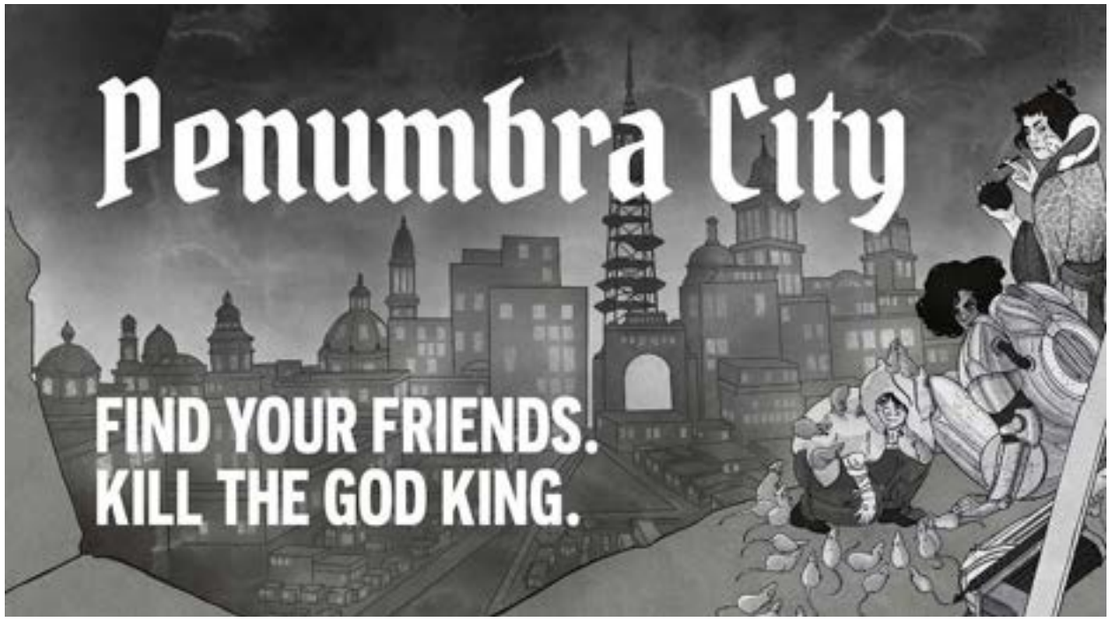
Jay Fraser

Review: PENUMBRA CITY

A small group of Organise! contributors gathered on a video call with Margaret Killjoy (A Country of Ghosts, The Lamb Will Slaughter the Lion) and Inmn Neruin, of publishing collective Strangers in a Tangled Wilderness, to play-test their forthcoming TTRPG Penumbra City. The opening adventure was a glimpse into the world beyond the city itself, and the never-ending war that is its context.

Set in the world of Harrow, Penumbra City is a multi-layered, fog-drenched setting hosting a diverse assortment of factions, gathered largely into three coalitions: The Revolutionists (who want to kill the god king Athe), The Bulwark (who don't) and The Reasonable (who either don't care, see a valid argument for both sides or are waiting to see who comes out on top before showing their hand.) The factions themselves range from anarchist knights to motorbike poet gangs to fungal physicians, bringing into play elements of weird science, steampunk, mysticism and mycomancy (mushroom magic). Add to this heavenly and demonic planes, mutated monsters, networked difference engines, press gangs for the eternal wars of the god kings, and giant carnivorous swamp cranes, and you have a world with a lot of adventure potential for a band of 3-6 anarchist-adjacent queer wanderers in the gloom.

Class struggle is baked into the concept of the game. Penumbra, which the narrator tells us is "a fancy word for the edge of a shadow", is the city that lies beneath the floating citadel of The Silver, where the aristocracy and high priesthood of the God King Athe live in luxury. The Core Rulebook takes the form of a guide to this undercity in the Silver's shadow, by one of the key Revolutionist

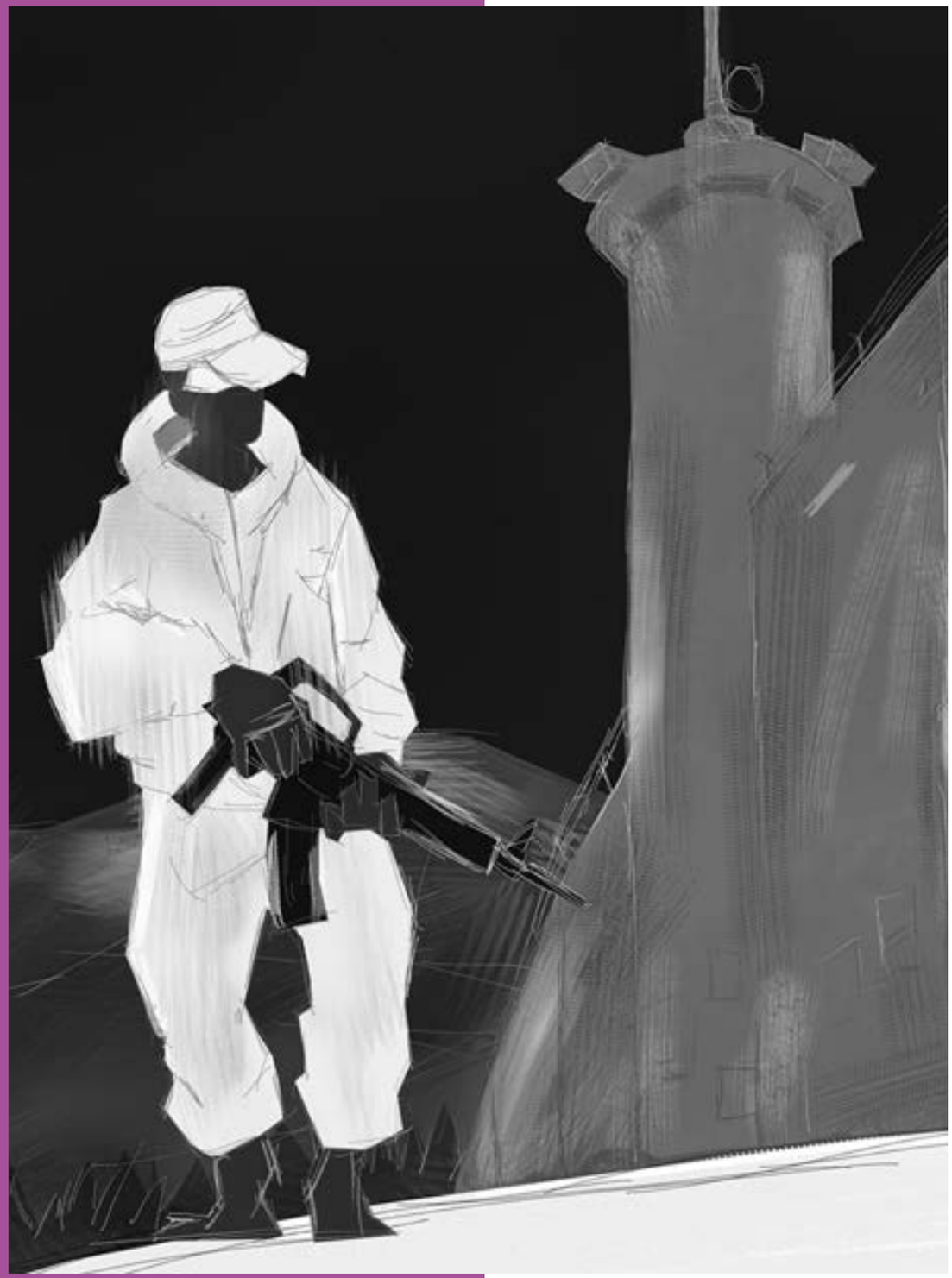


factions, and gives enough detail for immersion while leaving plenty of unexplored hooks for a GM to hang their own stories on. The overall effect is of a politically fraught corner of a vast and complex world. Artwork by Robin Savage enhances the strangeness of the world while giving the characters a sense of solidity: a Goeticist knees by a bowl of blood, touching the skeletal hand of a bird-like demon summoned into a circle of candles. A child crouches under a blanket overrun with the rats that are integral to the class abilities of the Rat King. Doggirls in cowboy boots or goggles and overalls crouch by a rivet-patched, steam-powered motorcycle.

Once familiar with your character class's combat abilities, the game mechanics are reasonably simple. Small touches, such as personal possessions with narrative hooks, help to create individual backgrounds, while skills and stats are – at least at start of play – standardised within each class. Gameplay is often reliant on judging situations and using character class abilities to discover and interpret NPC actions and plot elements. While there's a certain amount of combat and exploration, this is far from a smash-and-grab dungeon crawler, and the stories that work well here involve less killing and looting, more conflict resolution and cementing of alliances for mutual protection from cops, priests and army press gangs.

Aside from the world-building, the key original feature of this game is its reputation system. While there are aristocrats and an aspirational middle-class attempting to maintain a money economy, most of Penumbra City runs on a trust network, and access to resources depends on maintaining good standing with the three coalitions and their various factions. This really affects the dynamic of combat. There's little point in fighting just to grab loot unless it has plot significance or immediate use value for the characters. Though it would be technically possible to play a party of The Reasonable or factionless, the game is geared towards players and parties who lean left of liberal, and the themes and settings lend themselves to exploring conflict and cooperation in a crumbling state with a ruined economy.

This makes Penumbra City very much a game for our times, and particularly a game for anarchists. From the mechanics of play to the common and conflicting goals of the factions, it is a game that values co-operation, organisation and conflict resolution above brute force, but isn't above some occult hacking and old-fashioned bomb-throwing in the cause of literally bringing down the ruling class. ■



Interview: THE MAN CAME AROUND

The Man Came Around is a game of complex moral decisions, where you attempt to navigate across a militarised border with a group of people fleeing an authoritarian regime. Organise sat down with its developer, Thierry, to talk about indie game creation, the game, and the all-too-real politics and events that inspired it.

Thierry: Making games is something that I always wanted to do since I was a teenager but, at the time, being a game developer wasn't on the cards, it was less accessible. So I went to university, but after that I found there were formal lessons on it, my dream was really possible, so I jumped in. This is the thing that I wanted to do for so long, I thought, 'Oh, it's not going to be that difficult.' I had no idea how hard it would be.

What was it that surprised you with the difficulty?
Thierry: I mean, some difficulties were understandable. I had no programming background, so learning to code was… a process to say the least. I also had no artistic background, so that was another anticipated struggle. The thing you never think about though, as an indie solo developer, is all the other stuff that goes with creating a game: the time management, the marketing, the financial management, grant applications, running a crowdfunder, setting up a business. You think, oh, I'm just going to develop a game and it's going to be great. But all those things add up and then you need to be proficient at a lot of stuff that you didn't consider at first.

I also made another very common mistake, thinking that my game was not going to take that long! In my case, it took seven years to do it. For a couple of years, I was just learning and of course these last years weren't easy for anyone, which slowed things down. Also, being a solo developer, if anything happens to you, if you get sick, or burnt out, it really slows things down.

Seven years is a big chunk of time. How did you manage to support yourself while you were working on it?
Thierry: Many different ways. First off, my family helped me and I like to be honest about that. I think a lot of times people don't really understand how the financing works and having money upfront makes a big difference, so getting help from family, friends, and fools, is a way to do it.

Alongside that, I did freelancing, teaching kids to code, and set up a crowd funder. I also got support from a regional state institution in Belgium - they have some game funds you can apply to get loans or grants. When you start, you will think how it's going to be right, but finding funds is important if you like to pay your rent and being able to eat. And it's also a skill because you're going to have to do funding requests and a lot of paperwork that you never thought you would do.

With all of that, would you recommend anyone else tries to become a solo developer?
Thierry: That's a tough question. I wouldn't discourage anyone, but it's going to be a hard task. People need to realise that there is a lot of consideration about finances. A lot of projects never finish just because the devs run out of money to support themselves. You really need to ask yourself what is my Plan B, my Plan C? What are you going to do if the project is delayed? If things you hope to rely on don't pan out, it can be very hard. But it is also very rewarding making a game. If you really want to, you should try it, but be careful how you plan.

To get more specific, what was it that inspired you to make this game? Why did you decide to make The Man Came Around?
Thierry: At first, I just had a vague idea that I wanted to do a game with impactful moral choices. Then I decided it should be a survival game. At first, I planned to do the classic story, a plane crash in a mountain, will someone eat someone, those kind of things. After a while, the idea was a bit too tropey and boring. Then, in 2016, just over the border from me in France, there were these huge riots. They were protesting against labour reforms. I

don't remember the specifics now, but there were demonstrations all across France, and the French police were just beating everyone. I thought, when you look at France, that country always seems so close to becoming authoritarian. It seems when people complain, the only way the French state reacts is to send in riot cops.

At the same time, there was the Syrian refugee crisis. Europe was putting up barbed wire to try to stop refugees in places like Hungary. You already had a lot of places in Europe with walls and fences and guards, but this was a further escalation. I hated the way these people were being treated.

Those two things were what inspired the idea for the story. The story began to form. The basic idea was how would we react if we had to do the same thing for any reason, to have to leave your country and to go in exile. So that's how the best idea came by.

So your thought was 'What would it be like if people in a Western European country had to do the same thing as those in Syria, and flee their homes?'
Thierry: Yes, if we had to leave. For me, considering the direction Europe is going in, one of the likely reasons would be to flee an authoritarian regime. Then there was the irony of it, being kept in by the fences we'd built to keep others out, having to flee to the countries we had previously shit on. Of course, after I'd started, you had the US election and all Trump's escalating rhetoric about the wall, and banning migrants. It mirrored a lot of what I had already been writing.

What other real-world politics fed into your game over the years?
Thierry: There are many examples. It's a common story, a social protest of people not being heard by a government, and the same response from the government every time: repression, repression, repression. We saw it with the Black Lives Matter movement in the US, with further protests in France, with climate marches. They are different, but there is always the setup of people asking for something reasonable, like not killing the planet or having a living wage, but there is no dialogue entered into by those in power. Just we're going to beat you up, just enough to discourage you, tire you out, manage the discontent, until you have to give up and go back to work, and face the softer repression.

So I began thinking of how we could get past that. In the game, the country is on the verge of something, with many social movements pushing together. The government is on the back foot, so their reaction is to go harder with the repression, to double down, which I think is a real possibility in the real world.

One thing that caught my attention when playing, was that you had the committed paramilitary police force, but also the private security there for a wage. It was chilling, reading some of the snippets of dialogue they had, justifying their actions. Definite echoes of things you'll see when on social media or the news, justifying repression.

Thierry: Yeah, they are able to manufacture consent for their repression. In our society there are always people in favour of the state, no matter what. They want stability and order, or they just don't care.
The border control in the game is privatised, as more and more things in the real world are, for cost, profit, and lack of accountability. I wanted the guards to represent the kind of right-wing mindset you might hear play out at two in the morning at a pub, repeating the kind of prejudiced statements you see everywhere.
I wanted to show how easy it is to justify things, to fall into being part of the repression because you feel like you have some kind of control, to feel empowered even though you are just a minimum wage tool of the state.

As well as the terrifying prospect of reality, were you influenced by any games or other media?
Thierry: I think one of the big ones is This World of Mine. It's also a black-and-white game about people surviving in a war, and it's also a good example of moral choice, having an impact on the characters afterwards. There was also another game that's called Gods Will be Watching. Part of my game is definitely inspired by that.

When you were working on it, did you have in mind who would play it or who it would be for?
Thierry: Not really. I knew that people that would enjoy it would be a short list. Partly because of its strong political message, which would exclude right-wingers, and partly because it would only appeal to people who like the more indie games experiences.

At the start, I hoped to change people's minds perhaps, but I don't expect people to have a big change of heart because they play the game. It became more like an outlet for me to express stuff or my discomfort towards how society is going.

Of course, if someone plays it and it makes them think about the way things are going and reframe stuff in a new way, I would be more than happy. It's just that I'm not counting on it too much. Media is one part of a lot of stuff that you can do to change the world, and at the end of the day I'm like, okay, it's kind of just a game.
There is more important stuff you can do to convince people to change their political views, but that's what I had at the time. That's what I could do. So I put my effort into that.

I don't expect someone's going to play any one game or watch any one movie and then suddenly be like, oh, you know what? I need to bring down the government. But taken as a whole, media like this can have a big effect. Otherwise, you wouldn't get organisations like the US military sponsoring movies and gaming events.

Thierry: It's true that if you can have access to a more diverse messaging, and media that presents a different kind of opinions, it really helps. Does it help more than activists on the ground? No, it doesn't. But I really also understand that the more you get exposed to a message, the more you can get receptive to it.

We do need more diversity in the kind of discourse and representation in games. I spent a lot of time with other indie devs, so I'm in a bit of a bubble and sometimes I forget how standardised a lot of big games can be in their endorsing of status quo propaganda.

I hope for games to have way more diversity in the stories they tell. It's always cool to have more progressive games where presentation and mechanics are important, but so is the message. Indie games can afford to take risks with this, in the way big-budget studios are often prevented from doing.

Talking of presentation, you said you didn't have any sort of an artistic background, so how did you create your game's striking art style?
Thierry: Right at the start of the project, there were two of us, but the other guy had to stop because the development was hard at the time. We'd decided black-and-white due to the mountain setting. When it came time to redo the art myself, I stuck with that, partly because I thought it would be easier than colour. I got freelancers to do line art for the characters, but did the rest of the art myself. Working with limitations can be good. I knew it was never going to be a colourful and super-detailed looking game, but it doesn't have to be. I embraced the rough minimalist style, because it fit the story.

I always think as long as an art style is striking, I prefer simpler styles, but ones you can recognise. If you play Papers, Please, you're going to recognise it right away. Is it the most beautiful in a traditional sense? No. But for me, it works perfectly, and you couldn't confuse it with any other game.

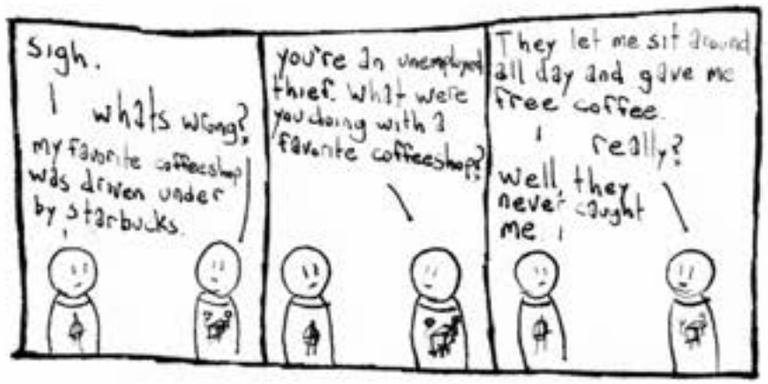
Okay. And what do you see as being next for you? Now you've got your game out.

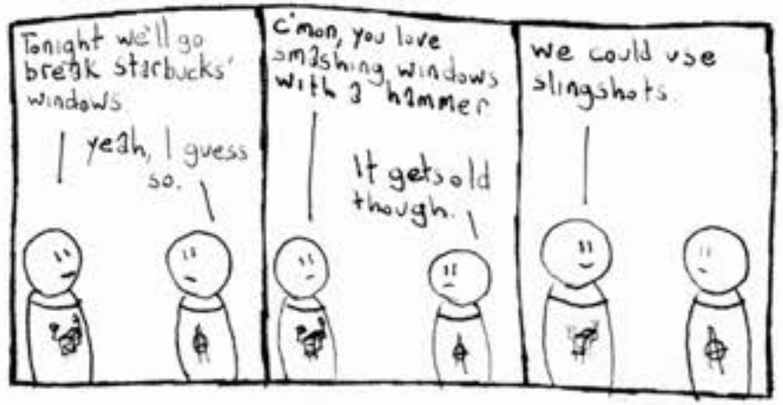
Thierry: I'm not sure yet if I'll be able to, but I would like to continue making games. Maybe grow the studio. Developing mostly solo was an interesting experience, but I'd like to do a game with others. Whatever I create, I want it to have a message, and to keep complex moral choices. I think it's one of the most interesting things about video games is that it's interactive, so you can have an action and seeing the consequences of that action, which you wouldn't get from a movie or from a book.

My final message to any gamers would be to support indie games, try them out, as you will definitely find some gems. ■

The Man Came Around is out now on Steam for Windows and Mac. It comes highly recommended by us at Organise!

THE SUPER-HAPPY ANARCHO FUN PAGES!

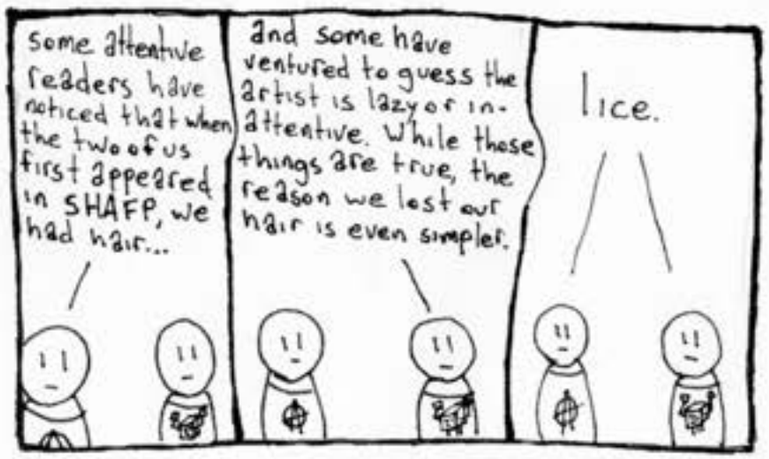

Sigh.
whats wrong?
my favorite coffeeshop was driven under by starbucks.
you're an unemployed thief. What were you doing with a favorite coffeeshop?
They let me sit around all day and gave me free coffee.
really?
well, they never caught me.


Tonight we'll go break starbucks' windows.
yeah, I guess so.
c'mon, you love smashing windows with a hammer
It gets old though.
we could use slingshots.

wanna smash it up
STAR BUCKS
for gods & masters
BUCKS
crash
Where is that music coming from?
my stereo.
you brought a stereo?!
Sure you have to set the mood if you want to do it right.

Learn Direct Action with Detonee & Bomb-o!
Hey kids! In that last comic our friends smashed some windows, but what did they do wrong?
thats right! they didn't wear masks. cameras are everywhere these days. what else?
they broke the window at its center. If you strike at the corners they break easier.

Sigh.
whats wrong this time?
well, we broke those windows...
but the store remains, and I'm sure they were insured.
Anarchy - Kicking capitalism in the back of the knees when it's not looking for 10,000 years.


some attentive readers have noticed that when the two of us first appeared in SHAFP, we had hair...
and some have ventured to guess the artist is lazy or inattentive. While these things are true, the reason we lost our hair is even simpler.
lice.

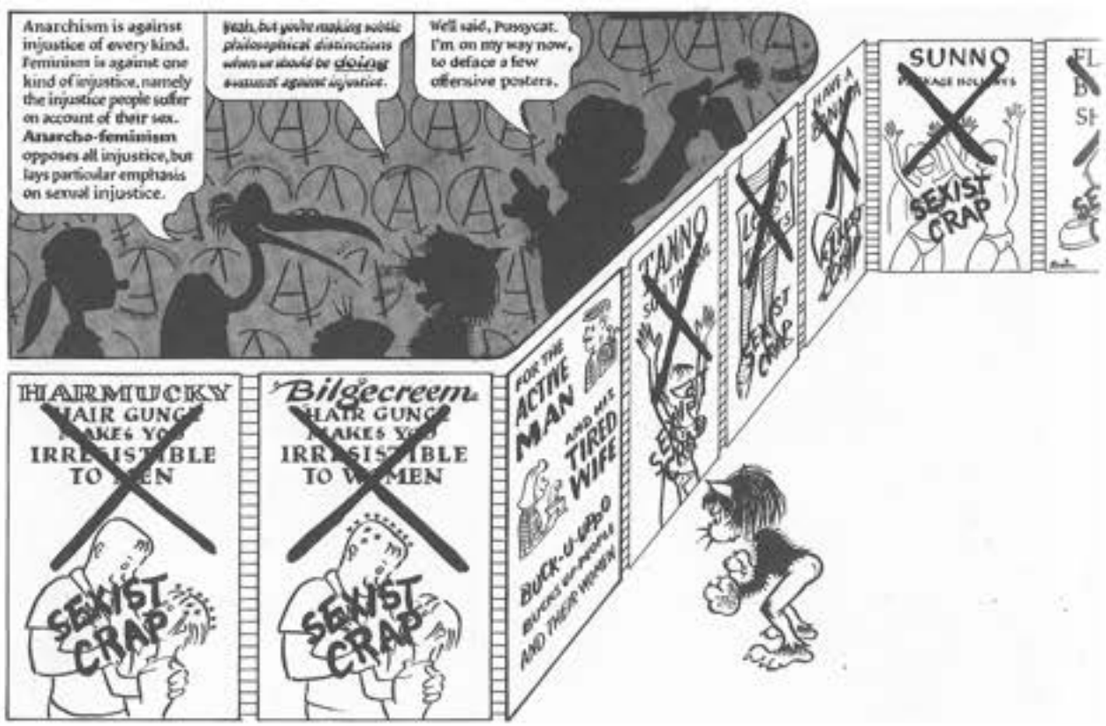
www.tangledwilderness.org for the web and printable 'zines
or check out your favourite disreputable bookstores for the book

WILDCAT

Cartoons by Donald Rooum
Collected editions available
from Freedom Bookshop

How can someone armed to the teeth, as you are, describe themselves as a "Peace-keeping Force"???
No problem.
A territorial dispute between small birds is often settled by a cat.

We are experiencing telepathy. Just let yourself know it.
I don't know what you have in mind.
Scientific scepticism has never produced anything of value.
That hypothesis is inconsistent with the data.
Why can't we have a science which imposes liberty?
Because liberty cannot be imposed.
Why are you so dismissive of unorthodox theories?? There's an ancient link between anarchism and cod's wallop!!
Right. But not a necessary connection. I prefer to use judgement.
Anarchists of your sort are all judgement, and no activity!
Not true. But your sort often seem to be all activity and no judgement.
Your lot are scared to do anything that'll really change society.
Whereas your lot are eager to change society by any method at all...
...but constitutionally incapable of methods requiring thought...
THUMP!
...and bloody unselective of your targets!!
Excuse me, comrade!!
You seem to have missed a really sexist poster!!
OK. I'll deface it next time I pass.
I'm on my way to trash the sex shop. Want to share in the activity?
Yeah! Great!! But...er...
I quite enjoy the sex shop. What makes it an example of injustice, more than, say, the toyshop?
I don't understand. Only a minute ago you were telling me I'd overlooked a sexy poster.
I didn't say "sexy". I said "sexist".
Now who's making subtle philosophical distinctions???
PRUDE


Anarchism is against injustice of every kind. Feminism is against one kind of injustice, namely the injustice people suffer on account of their sex. Anarcho-feminism opposes all injustice, but lays particular emphasis on sexual injustice.
Yeah, but you're making subtle philosophical distinctions when we should be closing ourselves against injustice.
Well said, Pussycat. I'm on my way now, to deface a few offensive posters.
SUNNO
SEXIST CRAP
TANNO
SEXIST CRAP
HAIR GUNG MAKES YOU IRRESISTIBLE TO MEN
SEXIST CRAP
Bilgecreem HAIR GUNG MAKES YOU IRRESISTIBLE TO MEN
SEXIST CRAP
FOR THE ACTIVE MAN AND HIS TIRED WIFE
BUCK-U-UPPO BUCKS FOR PEOPLE AND THEIR HENEN

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